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The Repression and Articulation of War Experience:
A Study of the Literary Culture of Craiglockhart War Hospital

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Abstract*

Prior study of Craiglockhart War Hospital has focused on the hospital's two most famous patients, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, along with the work of the psychotherapist W. H. R. Rivers. Craiglockhart's literary culture is studied in detail for the first time in this thesis and the hospital's therapeutic ethos used as a framework by which the creative work produced at the hospital can be examined. This thesis argues that the British Army's lack of consensus regarding the best treatment of war neuroses facilitated the development of Craiglockhart's expressive culture, in which patients were encouraged both to articulate their wartime memories and return to purposeful activity. The hospital's magazine, *The Hydra*, is examined at length; both in terms of its links to the wider genre of wartime soldier publications and as a telling document of the hospital's therapies in action. Owen and Sassoon's time at the hospital is also discussed, with particular emphasis on the hospital's central importance in Owen's poetic development and its troubling legacy in the post-war life of Sassoon. Finally, readers are introduced to George Henry Bonner, a patient of the hospital whose creative work is discussed here for the first time. This study makes clear the fact that, for the hospital's literary-minded patients, creative endeavour was an ideal means by which to negotiate the movement away from repression to the articulation of their wartime experiences.

*Lay Abstract identical

Signed Declaration

I confirm that this thesis, presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, has:

i) been composed entirely by myself,

ii) been solely the result of my own work,

iii) not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Thanks first and foremost to my supervisor, Randall Stevenson. Thank you for your guidance over the years.

‘Thank you, thank you!’ to my family and friends. I am beyond lucky to have you in my life and I couldn’t have finished this thesis without your support. You know who you are. If you think I’m referring to you: I am.

Mutti: Thanks for always being there for me and for your love. You’re amazing. I think Dad would be proud of us!

Mattias: Jag är väldigt lycklig som träffade dig. Tack för allt! Jag älskar dig.

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1. Introduction

Craiglockhart War Hospital enjoys a prominent position in the literary imagination and is celebrated for the fact that it was there, in August 1917, that Wilfred Owen met Siegfried Sassoon. Despite the volume of scholarship that has examined the lives of Owen and Sassoon, it is remarkable that a full-length study of Craiglockhart War Hospital has not yet been conducted. This thesis aims to redress this balance by making Craiglockhart the main subject of this study. Here, the connections between Craiglockhart's therapeutic ethos and the hospital's literary culture will be studied in detail for the first time. It will be argued that the expressive emphasis of Craiglockhart's treatment method did much to encourage the hospital's literary-minded patients to engage in creative activities while being treated there. Furthermore, it was by engaging in literary activity while at the hospital that patients were encouraged to move away from repressing their traumatic memories and to embrace the articulation of experience as a curative strategy.

Craiglockhart War Hospital was operational between 1916 and 1919, and was located in the village of Slateford, which is now part of the City of Edinburgh. The hospital was designated exclusively for the treatment of officers, who were referred to Craiglockhart with symptoms of neurasthenia after becoming mental casualties of the war while on active service. The hospital is now remembered for its literary connections. As mentioned above, it was at Craiglockhart that the poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon met for the first time, which is a meeting that has taken on great significance, given the fact that they are now counted among the finest poets of the First World War. Wilfred Owen famously arrived at the hospital suffering from neurasthenia and harbouring dreams of becoming a poet and found his life transformed by his contact with Sassoon, who helped him to realise his poetic aspirations. Siegfried Sassoon's time at the hospital was

not one of recuperation but rather one of incarceration, as he was sent there in July 1917 after protesting against the continuation of the war.

In addition to being of interest in literary terms, Craiglockhart's wartime history has made it the subject of further scholarly attention thanks to its significance to medical history. Not only did one of the First World War's most famous doctors, W.H.R. Rivers, work at the hospital between October 1916 and November 1917, the hospital itself was a progressive institution as a result of the fact that it embraced the use of psychology for the treatment of the war's mental casualties at a time when the discipline remained in its infancy.

It is remarkable that Craiglockhart War Hospital has not yet been the subject of a full-length study, given its rich historical significance. However, the hospital's wartime history has been celebrated in creative works that have brought Craiglockhart to the attention of a wider audience. The first creative work inspired by the hospital was Stephen MacDonald's play, *Not About Heroes*, which premiered at the Edinburgh Festival in 1982. The two-man play took as its focus the friendship that blossomed between Owen and Sassoon during their time at Craiglockhart, told by way of flashbacks narrated by the older Sassoon in the post-war years.

It was following the publication of Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration*, in 1991, that Craiglockhart was catapulted into the public imagination. The novel, which was the first volume of the *Regeneration Trilogy*, was set at Craiglockhart and described life at the hospital in detail. In the novel, Barker took a historiographical approach to her subject matter, weaving together historical and fictional details. In addition to describing historical events, such as the aftermath of Sassoon's protest, his interactions with his doctor, W. H. R. Rivers, and friendship with Owen, the novel fused fictional elements into the narrative, as evidenced by the character of Billy Prior, a fictional patient who interacts with the historical figures within the novel. *Regeneration* was a critical and popular success, and the powerful grip that the *Regeneration Trilogy* exerted on the popular and critical imagination is

evidenced by the fact that the final novel in the trilogy, *The Ghost Road*, went on to win the Man Booker Prize in 1995. *Regeneration* was later made into a film, directed by Gillies MacKinnon, which was nominated for the Best British Film BAFTA Award in 1997, the year of its release, thus ensuring Craiglockhart's prominence in the public imagination for many years.

For as long as Craiglockhart continues to be appended to studies of Owen, Sassoon and the medical history of the First World War, the hospital will remain an enigmatic entity about which we know relatively little. In literary terms, a key question resonates. What was the nature of the literary culture fostered at Craiglockhart and did it exert a tangible impact on the hospital's patients? It is by using this line of enquiry as the basis for a literary study of the hospital that this thesis hopes to initiate a greater scholarly conversation focused on Craiglockhart.

In order to answer this research question, the thesis will proceed as follows.

The first chapter will begin by introducing readers to Craiglockhart War Hospital and examining its therapeutic ethos in detail. Here, readers will be introduced to the various methods that were used by the hospital's doctors under the leadership of the hospital's three different commanding officers. Having established that the hospital's therapeutic method was a progressive one from the outset in accepting the psychological interpretation of neurasthenia, the expressive emphasis of Craiglockhart's treatments will be discussed in further detail. It will be shown that Craiglockhart's therapeutic emphasis on the articulation of troubling experiences, combined with its insistence that patients participate in purposeful activities during their recovery, was crucial in fostering the literary culture that existed at the hospital.

The expressive emphasis of the hospital's treatment method, combined with its insistence that patients engage in a purposeful recovery, found fascinating expression in the form of *The Hydra* magazine, which was created by the hospital's patients as part of their cure. The second chapter

will examine *The Hydra* in detail, with the magazine being of interest to this study due to the fact that it served as the printed embodiment of the hospital's literary culture. Comparison of *The Hydra* with *The Wipers Times* and *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* will allow the magazine to be located within the wider genre of soldier magazines that flourished during the First World War. *The Hydra* will also be examined as a document specific to Craiglockhart's literary culture, in which the hospital's patients negotiated the road to recovery by articulating their experiences. The third chapter will then proceed by means of a case study in which a selection of poetry published in *The Hydra* will be read as embodying the willingness of the hospital's literary-minded patients to engage with the hospital's therapeutic method through their creative endeavours.

In the first part of this thesis, the nature of Craiglockhart's literary culture will be established, the hospital's culture of articulation as manifested in *The Hydra* magazine examined and a selection of verse published in the magazine studied as evidence of the hospital's therapeutic method in action. Thereafter, the thesis will continue by examining the influence of Craiglockhart on three of its patients in greater detail.

Wilfred Owen's time at the hospital will be discussed over the course of two chapters and the significance of his time at the hospital on his poetic development will be further affirmed. In the first of the two chapters, Owen's time at the hospital will be discussed at length. Here, the positive influence of Sassoon will be justly recognised but it will be argued that Owen's doctor, Arthur Brock, played a more important role than has been previously acknowledged in Owen's poetic development. Discussion of the three stages that comprised Brock's treatment method will make clear the fact that Brock helped Owen to both confront his troubling wartime memories and to embrace his mission as a poet. In the second of the chapters about Wilfred Owen, the impact of Craiglockhart on the final year of Owen's life will be discussed. It will be argued, with reference to a selection of poems written during this time, that Owen continued to use poetry for therapeutic

ends long after leaving the hospital. As Owen had learned while at Craiglockhart, poetry could be a powerful medium through which to articulate troubling emotions and to confront distressing experiences. It was by continuing to use poetry for these ends in the final year of his life that Owen was able to maintain his mental equilibrium, accept his mission as a poet and, in time, to negotiate a return to active service in France.

The sixth chapter will examine the significance of Craiglockhart in the life of Siegfried Sassoon. Sassoon's case is fascinating one, as he was not neurasthenic on arriving at the hospital and was rather sent to Craiglockhart after making his protest against the war. As the chapter will show, Sassoon nonetheless benefitted greatly from his time at the hospital. Not only did his time at Craiglockhart provide him with the opportunity to dedicate himself to his poetry, Sassoon also benefitted from his interactions with W.H.R. Rivers and his exposure to Rivers's treatment method of autognosis, which encouraged the development of greater self-knowledge through the act of engaging with, and articulating, one's experiences. In addition to examining the positive legacy of Craiglockhart in Sassoon's post-war life, the chapter will conclude by examining Sassoon's troubled post-war years in more detail, arguing that the hospital was the locus of distressing memories from which he struggled to move forward. Furthermore, it will be posited that the failure of autognosis was the cause of Sassoon's inability to move forward with his life in the years following the end of the First World War.

This thesis will conclude by introducing readers to an unfamiliar name whose connection with Craiglockhart has only recently been re-established. George Henry Bonner is included in this thesis as, during his time in Edinburgh, Bonner was an active participant in Craiglockhart's literary culture who both edited *The Hydra* and contributed numerous poems to the magazine. Reference to manuscript verse found in his archive of personal papers, now held at Magdalen College, Oxford, will allow for a more nuanced picture of Bonner to be constructed. Bonner's activities while at Craiglockhart make clear that he was responsive indeed to the hospital's

treatment methods and eager to re-engage with his passion for literary endeavour while being treated there. However, closer examination of both his *Hydra* poems and manuscript verse makes it possible to conclude that Bonner was a man who was enduringly troubled by his war memories.

The thesis will begin proper, in the following chapter, by introducing readers to Craiglockhart War Hospital and the progressive methods of treatment that were implemented there during its period of operation.

2. Craiglockhart War Hospital: A Progressive Institution

In the south of Edinburgh, at a busy crossroads, stands the building formerly home to Craiglockhart War Hospital. The long façade of the large, Italianate building looks northwards, over the slate grey rooftops of Edinburgh to the glittering waters of the Firth of Forth and the rolling hills of Fife. The rear of the building nestles into the lee of Wester Craiglockhart Hill, now sculpted into the fairways and greens of Merchants Golf Course and criss-crossed by dog walkers. The building has undergone extensive renovation and modernisation in recent decades. After being bought by Edinburgh Napier University in 1980, a modern wing was added to the rear of the building and an oval shaped lecture theatre, clad in silver, glitters on the building's east side. The grounds to the east are now home to the campus's car park, the old gardens and allotments swallowed by swathes of tarmac, while the outlines of the old tennis courts and bowling greens linger on the lawns. Mature trees grow tall at the front of the building, lining the sweep of the old driveway and dappling it in shade.

Things were different in 1880, the year in which construction work on the building began. Back then, Slateford was a small village located around three miles to the south west of Edinburgh. The original building was constructed by the Craiglockhart Hydropathic Company, who sought to capitalise on the vogue for water cures, which were then the height of fashion. So it remained for over thirty years until 1916, when the building was requisitioned by the War Office.

Craiglockhart War Hospital opened its doors in October 1916, during the Battle of the Somme. The battle's human cost was staggering and its first day remains the bloodiest in British military history: 57,470 men were either killed or wounded (Simkins et al. 94). Yet Craiglockhart was not a hospital designated for the treatment of the physical casualties of war. Rather, its purpose was to treat officers who had become mental casualties during their active service. The men sent to Craiglockhart were, as per the medical

terminology of the time, suffering from ‘neurasthenia’, an anxiety disorder later incorporated into the diagnostic spectrum of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

During its 29 months of existence, which continued until March 1919, day-to-day life at Craiglockhart was overseen by the hospital’s commanding officer, a major in the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.), who was supported in his work by a staff comprised of R.A.M.C. doctors, nurses and V.A.D.s. The hospital’s admissions registers show that Craiglockhart could house between 150 and 170 officers at any one time and welcomed an average of 50 to 100 new patients each month (Admission and Discharge Registers). Patients were assigned to the care of a single doctor, with whom they met several times a week. In their free time, patients were encouraged to take part in the wide range of activities on offer at the hospital. Patients could join the Poultry Keeping Association, the Field Club, or the editorial team of the hospital’s magazine, *The Hydra*. Other activities included carpentry, photography, gardening and performing in the hospital’s weekly Saturday night concerts, among a great many others. Craiglockhart’s patients were also granted the privilege of leaving the hospital grounds during their leisure time, provided that they returned by a pre-arranged curfew and wore a blue armband in addition to their uniform. The blue band signalled that they had been wounded, while the presence of a white tab indicated that they were a patient at Craiglockhart.

Craiglockhart was small in comparison with other military hospitals of the time. Maghull Hospital in Liverpool, for example, had 25 therapists on site and could treat 500 men from the ranks and 50 officers (Young 362). In his discussion of the provision of treatment for the mental casualties of the Great War in ‘“Why Are They Not Cured?” British Shell Shock Treatment in the Great War’, Peter Leese describes Craiglockhart as being ‘a comparatively exclusive rest retreat’ (215). Yet this exclusivity was precisely the point: Craiglockhart’s low patient numbers ensured that its patients

could receive the expert one-to-one care deemed essential to the successful treatment of neurasthenic officers.

One patient on whom Craiglockhart made a powerful first impression was Lieutenant J.H. Butlin, whose personal papers are held in the archives of the Imperial War Museum, London. Butlin wrote to his friend Basil Burnett on 5 May 1917, the day after being admitted to Craiglockhart on 4 May 1917. He described the hospital as being 'a magnificent hydro standing in palatial grounds fitted with all the comforts that man's ingenuity can contrive' and stated that 'provided one is in by six o'clock & conforms to a few simple rules life is a complete + glorious loof' (1). In a letter written almost a month later, on 3 June 1917, Butlin was happy to report that Craiglockhart remained an 'abode of bliss' (2).

Butlin and his fellow patients may have felt that life at the hospital was one of 'bliss'; the hospital's doctors, however, were all too aware of the debilitating nature of neurasthenia and the threat that the high incidence of mental casualties posed to the British Army. At the start of the war, the military authorities failed to anticipate that large numbers of mental casualties would be incurred and, as a result, were caught off guard when men reported to field hospitals exhibiting unusual symptoms. Some suffered from sensory disorders, such as blindness; others could no longer control their physical movements or bowels; still more appeared stupefied; others suffered from shaking and tremors (Shepherd 1).

In the early months of the war, doctors examined these unusual symptoms with interest as they attempted to gain an understanding of the mechanism by which they occurred. At this time, no formal connection appears to have been made between these current symptoms and historical accounts of the psychological effects of battle. For example, in the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648), Spanish soldiers were affected by 'Estar Roto', a condition marked by depressive symptoms, while in the same war, German soldiers were labelled as suffering from *heimweh*, or homesickness. In the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), soldiers exhibiting such symptoms were said

to be suffering from ‘nostalgia’ while, in the American Civil War (1861-1865), the term ‘Da Costa’s Syndrome’ was used to describe a condition akin to a heart problem which now falls under the spectrum of anxiety disorders (Grogan 13-14).

As the medical profession and military authorities scrambled to gain an understanding of the symptoms exhibited by soldiers being sent down from the line, a physicalist interpretation gained traction. This was one in which soldiers’ symptoms were linked to the physical effects of exposure to a shell blast and the damage that it could cause to the brain. These early attitudes are evident in Albert Wilson’s 1914 article, ‘Notes on 150 Cases of Wounded French, Belgians, and Germans’, in which he presented his discussion of psychological cases under the heading ‘Air Concussion’. This was in-line with popular thinking of the time, which attributed psychological symptoms to a shell blast’s ability to physically damage the brain. Wilson reported that rest proved curative in all cases and he concluded that ‘I do not think psychologists will get many cases’ (807).

It was little over two months later that the term ‘shell shock’ was used in the literature for the first time. It was first used by Charles Myers’s in the article ‘A Contribution to the Study of Shell Shock’, published in February 1915, but he did not originate the term. It had, in fact, been in popular use among soldiers at the front since late 1914 (Jones, ‘Shell Shocked’ 18; Leese, *Shell Shock* 1). Like Wilson before him, Myers’s findings were based on his first-hand experiences in Northern France and he, too, connected the onset of symptoms with proximity to an exploding shell. Unlike Wilson, however, Myers recognised that shell shock was not a new condition and instead concluded that ‘The close relation of these cases to those of “hysteria” appears fairly certain’ (320).

Hysteria was a well-established condition with a clinical history extending back to antiquity. The condition was associated with female experience; the Greek root of the term hysteria referred to ‘the wandering womb’ (Roudebush 255). Given the gendered nature of hysteria as a medical

condition, it is unsurprising that the term 'shell shock' proved enduringly popular. In '"Minds the Dead Have Ravished": Shell Shock, History, and the Ecology of Disease-Systems', Chris Feudtner explains that the popularity of the term resulted from its ability to describe a uniquely male experience that 'captured both the stunning technological advance in warfare (shelling) and the wrenching human reaction (shock)' (378). In her seminal text *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830 – 1980*, Elaine Showalter agrees that the popularity of the term stemmed from its ability to distance the symptoms suffered by men from those suffered by women, who had long been considered the weaker sex. 'The efficacy of the term "shell shock" lay in its power to produce a masculine-sounding substitute for the effeminate associations of "hysteria",' she writes, 'and to disguise the troubling parallels between male war neurosis and the female nervous disorders epidemic before the war' (172).

Further distinctions also came into play, this time between the symptoms suffered by men of the ranks and officers. Officers were judged to be suffering from neurasthenia, a term coined by the physician George Beard in 1869 to describe the 'excessive physical and mental fatigue' suffered by those 'with a more refined nervous system, including intellectuals and professionals' (Taylor 550). Men of the ranks on the other hand, were diagnosed with shell shock and therefore were not shielded from the taint of the condition's association with hysteria, as is further clarified by Showalter in *The Female Malady*. Here, she explains that:

> the hysterical soldier was seen as simple, emotional, unthinking, passive, suggestible, dependent, and weak – very much the same constellation of traits associated with the hysterical woman – while the complex and overworked neurasthenic officer was much closer to an acceptable, even heroic, ideal (175).

As the war continued, the number of mental casualties being diagnosed continued to grow. More troubling still, the physicalist interpretation was challenged as increasing numbers of cases were seen in which men suffered psychological symptoms without having been directly exposed to a shell blast or wounded. In 1914, 1,906 cases labelled 'behavioural disorder

without physical causes' had been admitted to hospitals for treatment. By 1915, this number had swelled to 20,327: a staggering 9 percent of battle casualties (Winter 129). Faced with this large number of cases in which men's symptoms did not accord with a physical cause, the military authorities became concerned that malingering could be an issue. In *Before My Helpless Sight: Suffering, Dying and Military Medicine on the Western Front, 1914-1918,* Leo van Bergen reports that such suspicions were relatively widespread and that certain unsympathetic members of the military authorities believed that 'men only seemed to have trouble with their nerves only after they had been informed about the existence of something called shell shock' (377).

The British Army's own procedures for the reporting of mental casualties could be viewed as being discriminatory in themselves. Starting in mid-1915, patients were classified according to the cause of their symptoms: 'Shell Shock, Wound' for cases with a physical cause and 'Shell Shock, Sick' for those who were physically unharmed. Just as proximity to a shell blast had earlier served as proof that a man's symptoms were genuine, in order to be labelled 'Shell Shock, Sick', the patient had to have broken down while exposed to enemy fire. If this was the case, he was entitled to wear a wound stripe and was eligible to draw a military pension. Those whose breakdown could not be classified in this manner were eligible for neither and the veracity of their symptoms was doubted.

Meanwhile, the medical discourse was being rapidly reshaped as doctors gained greater experience in the treatment of cases. In 'A Contribution to the Etiology of Shell Shock', published in June 1916, Harold Wiltshire argued that 'Bad terminology' was a significant factor in the confusion that surrounded the diagnosis and treatment of mental casualties. This was because the term shell shock was being used 'indiscriminately to include all functional nerve cases' (1207). Based on his first-hand experiences in France, Wiltshire stated emphatically his belief that 'the vast majority of these cases, if not all, were due to psychic shock, and not to

physical shock' (1207-8). The breakdown of soldiers on active service, he argued, was due to mental factors. '[P]sychic exhaustion from continued fear' and 'some special psychic shock' were critical in the onset of symptoms (1212).

Less than a month after Wiltshire's article was published, the Battle of the Somme roared into life. The battle was a significant drain on the British Army's man-power: by the summer of 1916, 200,000 men had been killed and high numbers were being sent down the line with shell shock. In August, the military authorities intervened and ordered that doctors should not send mental casualties down the line unless they were severe (Shepherd 46-7). Furthermore, Charles Myers, who had first coined the term 'shell shock' in the literature, was appointed Consulting Psychologist to the British Army. He was quick to audit the current treatment being offered in France and outlined three steps that were crucial if treatment of the war's mental casualties was to be effective. These were later enshrined in 'The Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into "Shell-Shock"' in 1922 and comprised: '1. Promptness of action. 2. Suitable environment. 3. Psychotherapeutic measures' (123). These three steps continue to shape the modern-day provision of care for mental casualties of war and were effective for several reasons. These are outlined by Albert Glass in the article 'Military Psychiatry and Changing Systems of Mental Health Care', in which he applauds their success. Treatment at neurological treatment centres provided patients with the opportunity to recover from other physical strains that might be exacerbating their condition, such as exhaustion, while enabling them to remain close to their comrades with whom they had formed meaningful bonds. Furthermore, treating patients close to the lines made implicit the expectation that patients would return to duty after treatment (506).

The military was swift to respond to Myers's recommendations and specialist treatment centres were quickly set up behind the line. The first such Neurological Treatment Centre opened its doors in November 1916

and was run by William Brown, who had been one of Myers's students at Cambridge. Brown was charged with returning his patients to active service as swiftly as possible and only those whose symptoms could not be eased by medical staff in France were to be sent back to Britain. After being sent to large hospitals for processing, such as at the Royal Victoria Hospital, near Southampton, or the 4th London General Hospital, patients were referred to specialist hospitals around Britain. One such specialist hospital, in the case of neurasthenic officers, was Craiglockhart.

In the first phase of Craiglockhart's operations, beginning in October 1916, the hospital's commanding officer was a local man and member of the R.A.M.C., Major William Bryce. In *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War*, Peter Leese identifies that a scandal blighted the first months of Craiglockhart's operations, during which time patients were subjected to mistreatment (104-5). However, the material cited by Leese at this point contains no confirmation that any such scandal took place. This confusion appears to have arisen from the fiction work *England, Their England* (1933) by A. G. MacDonnell in which MacDonnell's protagonist, Lieutenant Cameron, is treated for neurasthenia at a hydropathic institute. In the novel, the working practices of the fictional hydro are disciplinarian and harsh, and the doctors' approach to their patients described as consisting 'of finding out the main likes and dislikes of each patient, and then ordering them to abstain from the former and apply themselves diligently to the latter' (17). While it is true that MacDonnell was a patient at Craiglockhart, he was not a patient at the hospital until April 1918, eighteen months after Craiglockhart opened; it is therefore most likely that MacDonnell's account has blurred the lines between fiction and reality. As the following discussion of the hospital's operations under the command of Bryce will show, Craiglockhart, rather than being blighted by scandal in its early operations, was instead a progressive institution from the outset in accepting the psychological interpretation of mental breakdown in war and offering its patients an excellent quality of care.

Bryce provided a detailed account of his therapeutic method in the chapter 'The Management of the Neurotic – Institutional' in the 1920 text *Functional Nerve Disease: An Epitome of War Experience for the Practitioner.* Here, he argued that it was vital that doctors establish close relationships with their patients, maintain low case-loads to facilitate this relationship and that they live onsite to best serve their patients (155). Treatment should be 'severely individual', he argued, and be guided by the bond built between the doctor and his patient (157). Re-education was an essential component of treatment, it being the means by which the officer would become, once again, 'able . . . to cope with himself and his environment' (158). It was to this end that patients should be given the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities, with their successful participation serving as evidence of the success of their treatment (159). Participation in the hospital's activities was not merely a matter of personal enjoyment; patients should seek to satisfy the 'common good' of hospital life through meaningful interaction (163).

Bryce appears to have been an immensely popular commanding officer and was described as the hospital's 'guide, philosopher, and friend' in the 21 July 1917 issue of *The Hydra* (9). Bryce is also described in some detail in the 'Notes on the Staff of Craiglockhart War Hospital', a short collection of notes written in an unknown hand that are now held among the Sassoon Papers at the Imperial War Museum, London, which describe the hospital's staff at the time. The 'Notes on the Staff' reveal that Bryce was 'Very much liked + a good all round Sportsman, [who] could beat most of the patients half his age at games, swimming, boxing, etc.' He was, apparently 'not yet acclimatized to "Military Etiquette"' and 'much to the disgust of the Head of the Office [he was] apt to rush around the Hospital without cap, Sam Browne or cane.' Most troublingly of all, the notes recall, he 'spoke to many of his Staff as <u>equals</u>!', a fact that is recounted with evident delight (297). Bryce's name appears regularly in *The Hydra*: he attended the Debating Society, took a keen interest in the work of the Gardening and Poultry

Keeping Association and sometimes even sang at the hospital's Saturday night concerts. He was also a member of the hospital's cricket team, regularly played golf and lawn tennis with his patients and was celebrated as being a formidable billiard player. In *The Hydra*'s very first issue, his praises were sung in the anonymous poem 'The Major', where he is praised for being 'the very best of sports' and applauded for being 'an absolute brick' (9).

Working alongside Bryce was Craiglockhart's most famous doctor, W. H. R. Rivers, a polymath now celebrated for his work as a psychologist, ethnographer and anthropologist. As was the case with Rivers's superior, Bryce, the 'Notes on the Staff of Craiglockhart War Hospital' paint a vivid picture of Rivers. On first arriving, he was apparently first considered to be 'retiring + timid', a judgement that was quickly 'altered when he routed the fiery matron in a few words, gained her obedience + possibly her respect' (298). The 'Notes on the Staff' further make clear that Rivers's priorities lay not in adhering to the military's way of doing things: he was 'a typical scholar with no use for "Military Etiquette"' (297). Like Bryce, Rivers was prone to lapses in military decorum that the other staff appear to have watched with great bemusement. The 'Notes on the Staff' recount that:

> When he [Rivers] was Orderly officer for the day he had to be forcibly reminded that he must not go his rounds unless fully equipped for all emergencies in full panoply of uniform including cane, useful for prodding beef + mitey cereals. Bowed courteously to V.A.D. cooks instead of saluting (another grave breach). (298)

Rivers's credentials as a scholar were certainly impressive. He graduated from the University of London in 1882, with dreams of becoming a ship's surgeon. Rejected by the army on the grounds of ill-health that had lingered since childhood, Rivers instead elected to become a ship's surgeon, travelling as far afield as Japan in 1887. His interest in psychology and neurology developed in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and he travelled to Jena in 1892 to study experimental psychology. On returning to Britain, Rivers's passion for psychology was fixed and he was determined to alter his career path accordingly (Slobodin 13). On returning to England,

Rivers devoted himself to psychology for the following six years, lecturing at University College and Guy's Hospital in London, while also lecturing and working at St. John's College, Cambridge.

In 1898, Rivers's nascent interest in anthropology led him to take part in the Torres Strait expedition, during which he studied the familial hierarchies and colour vision of native Melanesians. In the years that followed, he took part in further anthropological work among the Todas in the south of India, worked with his Cambridge colleague Henry Head on a neurological project 'A Human Experiment in Nerve Division' and continued his work in psychology. Rivers was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1899, was a founding member of the *British Journal of Psychology* in 1904 and was made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1908. When war was declared, he was on a return voyage from his second anthropological visit to the Solomon Islands in Oceania.

When Rivers returned to Britain in March 1915, he was resolved to support the war effort in whatever way he could. Though declared unfit for medical work at the front, he was successful in securing a position at Maghull Military Hospital in Liverpool where he was tasked with treating shell shocked soldiers. Maghull Hospital was run in accordance with the psychological interpretation of shell shock and the hospital's doctors used the term 'psycho-neuroses' to describe the range of psychological symptoms suffered by their patients. In the article 'Shell Shock at Maghull and the Maudsley: Models of Psychological Medicine in the UK', Edgar Jones states that Maghull was both 'innovative and radical' in accepting the psychological interpretation of shell shock and in offering psychological treatment to patients at a time when such interpretations and procedures were not the norm in the wider medical community (Jones 382; 370).

While Rivers and his fellow doctors agreed that psychological factors were the cause of their patients' symptoms, there was little consensus regarding the best method of treatment. Psychology as a discipline remained in its infancy and a commonality of approach had not yet been

established in clinical practice. At Maghull, each doctor's therapeutic practices were informed by their own readings of psychotherapeutic texts, whose techniques they implemented as they saw fit. In 'Shell-Shock and Psychological Medicine in First World War Britain', Tracey Loughran confirms that, despite there being a great interest in psychology, doctors were 'extremely cautious of taking up the views of any one thinker totally or exclusively' (82). Instead, they preferred to implement what Loughran terms a 'magpie approach', in which practitioners selected from multiple authors the features that they considered most beneficial to their work (82). This is further confirmed by Suzanne Raitt in 'Early British Psychoanalysis and the Medio-Psychological Clinic', where she confirms that the 'eclecticism of army doctors such as Myers' was not unusual but was, rather, characteristic of work in the field at the time (72).

Rivers's work with the mental casualties of the First World War is now highly celebrated. Elaine Showalter praises his method in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, where she states that his work is 'associated with the most enlightened, probing, humane, and sensitive studies of wartime neurosis' (183). In 'Soldiers, Psychiatrists, and Combat Trauma', John Talbott states his agreement, writing that Rivers 'was a complete maverick' and positing that Rivers's diverse pre-war career did much to contribute to the success of his wartime work. Talbott argues that:

> [Rivers] had not only the gaze of a physician, on the alert for physical manifestations of disease and disorder, but also the eye and ear of an ethnographer, attuned to clues from the culture and the environment about the shaping–and deforming–of personality. Rivers was unusually well-prepared to see combat trauma as a response to external or environmental stress. (446)

A letter written by Mrs. John Hopkinson in *The Times* on 14 June 1922 provides first-hand confirmation of the high esteem in which Rivers was held by his patients at Craiglockhart. Mrs. Hopkinson had herself seen the work of the hospital at close-quarters: she explains that she had been 'privileged to help a little in his [Rivers's] work by offering distractions [to the patients]—

driving some out, entertaining them, and so forth—as much as possible'. She writes that Craiglockhart's patients 'constantly spoke of Dr. Rivers's amazing patience, of his helpful and unremitting suggestive treatment, uplifting beyond words. He gave, indeed, his whole soul and fine mind to this most trying work'. She praised Rivers for enabling these men 'to take up their life's work again' and concluded by stating 'I know well that these young men, many almost boys then, will think of him as their saviour indeed, for such he truly was' (13).

Like his former colleagues at Maghull, Rivers adopted a 'magpie approach', as identified by Loughran, in developing his own methods by which to best treat his patients. We can better appreciate this approach in action by making brief reference to Rivers's interactions with the works of Freud. In *Instinct and the Unconscious* (1920), Rivers documents his own theory regarding the formation of neuroses. Here, he agrees with Freud that factors within the individual were the cause and further concurs that personal experiences were the trigger for episodes of mental ill-health. However, he disregards Freud's emphasis on sex, stating that there is 'no reason to suppose that factors derived from the sexual life . . . [play] any essential part in [the] causation [of neuroses]', and does not support Freud's insistence that events in early childhood were the cause of neuroses in later life. Instead, Rivers argues that the instinct of self-preservation is surely 'even more fundamental' (4-5) and states that recent events were instead the source of his patients' mental distress. His experiences as an army doctor had provided him with ample evidence of the fact that his patients were traumatised by recent memories of wartime experience and by 'happenings so distressing that the most painful emotions arise when the happenings are recalled' (19).

In 'An Address on The Repression of War Experience', a paper delivered to the Section of Psychiatry at the Royal Society of Medicine on 4 December 1917, Rivers provided a detailed account of his method for treating the war's mental casualties. The address was later published in *The Lancet* on 2

February 1918 and it is to this version of the text that I refer. Here, Rivers clarified his own understanding of the cause of his patients' symptoms. It was not the distressing experiences and strain of wartime service that resulted in breakdown, here termed 'war neurosis', but rather 'the attempt to banish from the mind distressing memories of warfare or painful affective states which have come into being as a result of their war experiences'. Rivers argued that, while it was quite natural for soldiers to 'thrust aside painful memories just as it is natural to avoid dangerous or horrible scenes in actuality', the act of attempting to 'banish such experience from their minds altogether' had an 'evil influence' on their mental state. The repression of war experience was problematic when carried out 'under conditions in which it fails to adapt the individual to his environment': soldiers who sought to eliminate distressing memories from their minds only put themselves under considerable mental strain which would likely, in time, render them incapable of coping with the rigours of front line service (173).

Officers who broke down after attempting to repress troubling memories faced further challenges when they were sent down the line for medical treatment. Prevailing medical attitudes regarding the best method of treatment and the management of troubling emotions here proved problematic due to the fact that patients were typically advised 'that they should endeavour to banish all thoughts of war from their minds' (173). Such a course of action would only encourage the continuation of symptoms, given the fact that it advocated the continuation of repression.

The form of treatment best suited to the officers under his care at Craiglockhart was one that Rivers adopted from William Brown, his one-time colleague at Maghull who, in 1917, went out to France to run the first of Myers's new Neurological Treatment Centres. Brown's preferred method was autognosis, which had proved particularly effective in the treatment of officers who had broken down. In *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, Brown described his method and explained that:

> [Autognosis] takes the form of long talks between the physician and the patient, in which the latter is encouraged to describe as minutely as possible his exact feelings and thoughts at the time of the outbreak of his symptoms and just before, and also his present mental condition, his hopes and fears for the future, his regrets for the past. (103)

Rivers's 'An Address on the Repression of War Experience' makes clear that his patients were receptive to this method, and cites the example of a patient who had been encouraged to repress his memories by a previous doctor who admitted to Rivers that 'it was obvious to him that memories such as those he had brought with him from the war would never be forgotten' (174).

It was by examining the circumstances of their breakdown, combined with interrogating their wider emotional experiences, that patients were encouraged to begin the process of 're-education', whose goal was that the patient would 'adjust himself to the conditions created by his illness' (Rivers, *Psychiatry and the War* 368). In the case of the aforementioned officer, the process of re-education began when Rivers asked his patient whether it 'was not possible to make them [his traumatic memories] into tolerable, if not even pleasant, companions instead of evil influences' as a means of beginning the process of articulation (174). Rivers states that through the process of articulating his traumatic memories and the attendant emotions that had so distressed him, the officer's fearfulness was gradually eradicated and he was finally able to return to duty (174). The on-going clinical value of this method has been confirmed in contemporary discussions of the mechanisms of trauma. In 'The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma', Van der Kolk and Van der Hart vindicate Brown and Rivers's method in their description of the modern-day conception of the mechanism by which trauma can be treated. They identify that 'Traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated within existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language'. They

conclude that 'in order for this to occur successfully, the traumatised person has to return to the memory often in order to complete it' (176).

Rivers's method emphasised both the articulation of experience and the re-education of the individual, a process by which traumatic experiences were incorporated into the wider narrative of the patient's life. This emphasis on re-education makes clear the fact that Rivers was not merely interested in removing his patients' symptoms, as re-education was the means by which the success of his treatment method could be evaluated. Rivers's great sensitivity to his patients' experience, as identified by Talbott earlier, enabled him to examine their holistic health and it is clear that he did not send men whose recovery was in doubt back to active service. In 'An Address on the Repression of War Experience', Rivers describes another Craiglockhart case in which he treated a patient who suffered from bouts of severe depression as a result of his war experiences. During the course of the man's treatment, Rivers became aware of the fact that his patient would likely downplay these symptoms at any future medical board and perhaps be declared fit as a result. Anxious that the man should not be returned to active service without his underlying symptoms being removed, Rivers began the process of re-education, thereby making clear to the patient that his depression was linked to an on-going repression of experience. Rivers states that this course of action was absolutely necessary due to the fact that, should the officer be returned to active service, he 'would inevitably have broken down . . . and might have produced some disaster by failure in a critical situation or lowered the morale of his unit by committing suicide' (177). The patient in question was subsequently invalided out of the army. Rivers's over-riding concern for the holistic health of his patients is made clear in this example: he did not merely remove his patients' symptoms but instead took great pains to ensure that their overall psychic health was restored. The combination of therapeutic conversations with autognosis and re-education thus enabled Rivers to be certain that his patients could function successfully as individuals, no matter where their journey from

Craiglockhart ended, whether in a return to active duty, on light duties in Britain or in a return to civilian life.

When we turn our attention to the work carried out at Craiglockhart by Rivers's colleague Arthur Brock, it becomes clear that the hospital's ethos as a whole was shaped by the belief that the health of patients as individuals, not merely as soldiers, was of supreme importance. Led by Bryce, the hospital's staff worked towards a common goal by diverse methods. For Rivers, a psychotherapeutic approach was essential; for his colleague, Brock, 'ergotherapy', a working cure, was the means by which patients would be returned to overall health and function.

Brock, like Bryce, was a local man. He hailed from Kirkliston, which was then a small village around ten miles to the west of Edinburgh, long since swept up into Edinburgh's suburban sprawl. After being awarded his M.D. in 1896, Brock worked as a General Practitioner in a number of employments: he worked at the Woodburn Sanatorium for Consumptives in Edinburgh (1902 & 1910-12), was Resident Medical Officer at the Convalescent House of Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary (1903-4) and acted as Physician to the New Town Dispensary in Edinburgh (1905-1919) (Cantor 7). Brock joined the R.A.M.C. in 1915, serving as a doctor on a hospital ship to India and working both in France and at a military depot in the south of England before joining the staff at Craiglockhart (12).

The 'Notes on the Staff of Craiglockhart War Hospital' describe Brock as being a man of striking physical appearance who was an enthusiastic participant in hospital life. He was apparently 'Very tall, thin, [with] hunched up shoulders, big blue hands' and, most memorably of all, had a 'High pitched voice suggestive of Arctic regions' (301). He was also 'Full of energy' and clearly a man who practised what he preached. A keen advocate of the value of active recovery, he apparently 'Pushed his patients out of bed in the dark mornings and marched them out for a walk before breakfast' (301). This was an approach evidently not appreciated by all: the 'Notes on the Staff' reveal that some patients 'bolted themselves into

lavatories + bathrooms' in an attempt to escape him, while another officer boasted that 'if he lay flat under his bed, so that the untidy bed clothes hid him, as if [he was] an early riser, he escaped' (301). Brock also makes an appearance in one of Lieutenant J. H. Butlin's letters, dating from 11 May 1917. Here, he is described as being 'a clever man, a bit of a philosopher . . . & somewhat of a crank. . . . His great idea, as I had been previously warned, is to get you to take up a hobby' (2).

The most detailed account of the method used by Brock during his time at Craiglockhart is given in the article 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', published in *The Sociological Review* in July 1918. At this time, Brock continued his work at Craiglockhart, which he described as being a 'fortune' (25). Rather than being an exclusively war-time problem, Brock believed that the epidemic of war neuroses was 'an "acute" exacerbation of a more or less chronic or "sub-acute" condition, from which . . . society had been suffering long before the flare-up of the present war' (25). He considered neurasthenia to be 'a privation or relative absence of life. . . . with its unity in space and time both gone—life broken up and dispersed into its constituent elements', a process that had been worsened by modernity and its severing of meaningful contact between individuals and their environment (26). In the case of neurasthenic officers, their 'unity in space and time' was disrupted when they departed from the environment of their everyday lives; thus, on active service they were weakened by having lost a meaningful connection to their environment and were susceptible to breaking down in response to the novel strains to which they were exposed. An officer became neurasthenic, Brock clarified, when his 'experience of one kind of environment [for example, the front line] has been so terrific that he is inclined to evade for the future anything savouring of the "environmental" at all . . . the whole battle of life in its widest and most normal sense has become–for the time at least–abhorrent to him'. As a result, patients became marooned in the present moment and disconnected from their meaningful connections to both past and future (28).

Brock goes on to outline the steps that comprise his treatment in 'The Re-Education of the Adult'. Here, he identifies three steps that form part of a 'progressive series: 1) Psychoanalysis . . . 2) Therapeutic conversations . . . 3) Ergotherapy' (30). Psychoanalysis was useful in that it enabled Brock to determine the factors that had contributed to his patients' breakdown. He was quick to dismiss the significance of Freud, however, stating that Freud's emphasis on the libido was 'hopelessly inadequate' (31) and instead seeing resonances between Freud's method and the one used in classical medicine by Socrates, who taught men by 'bringing their thoughts to birth' (30). For Brock, psychoanalysis was a tool by which to prove to patients that the true causes of neurasthenia were '"environmental"—due to circumstances, and . . . "organismal" —personal, individual'. As a result, he found that 'not much' was needed (31).

Having established the cause of his patients' condition, Brock engaged his patient in therapeutic conversations. Here, his goal was to discern whether his patient's condition stemmed from an 'environmental' cause, such as the fear of what might happen on returning to active service, or from an 'organismal' root, whereby the patient's mind had been driven into submission by events that they had witnessed. After discerning the cause of his patient's malaise, Brock removed what he termed the 'hopelessness of the patient's outlook' by engaging him in the discussion of his troubling wartime memories. Thereafter, because 'a residual psychasthenic condition' typically lingered, as expressed through 'a reluctance to start functioning', a course of ergotherapy was required (31).

Ergotherapy, or 'the cure by functioning', was the process by which the neurasthenic patient was brought back into meaningful contact with his environment through purposeful activity (31). Brock illustrated the importance of this by referring to the myth of Antaeus and Hercules, a painting of whom he had hung on one of the walls in his office. Antaeus was a wrestler who derived his strength from his connection with Mother Earth; however, on being lifted into the air by Hercules during a wrestling match,

he was finally defeated after this strength-giving connection was severed. Brock explained the relevance of the myth to his patients in the January 1918 issue of *The Hydra.* Here, he explained that:

> Now surely every officer who comes to Craiglockhart recognises that, in a way, he is himself Antaeus who has been taken from his Mother Earth and well-nigh crushed to death by the war giant or military machine . . . . Antaeus typifies the occupation cure at Craiglockhart. His story is the justification of our activities. (3)

Just as Antaeus derived his strength from his contact with the ground, so too would the modern individual if he was able to connect meaningfully with his wider environment.

'Synoptic seeing' was the essential first step and it was a process by which the patient was made to 'sense' and 'understand' both the environment around him and his own place in it ('Re-Education' 32). Thereafter, the patient was encouraged to begin actively reengaging himself with his environment. It was to this end that such a wide range of activities were on offer at Craiglockhart: as part of their treatment, patients could take part in activities for which they showed skill while at the same time engaging with others (32). It was essential that these activities should be meaningful and that patients take part in work with which they were familiar from their earlier lives. By doing so, Brock's patients would, like Antaeus, gain strength by establishing a profound connection with the earth and find stability by linking up the continuum of their past, present and future (33).

Brock's emphasis on holistic treatment is one that he shared with Rivers. Like his colleague, Brock treated his patients as individuals, paying close attention to their holistic health and looking beyond the mere removal of symptoms. He summed this up by writing that, 'when all is said and done, the essential treatment of these patients resolves itself into "finding them their job"', their meaningful purpose in life, by 'guiding them to it, keeping them at it, and only relinquishing them finally when their interests are sufficiently awakened to ensure that they will now "carry on" of themselves' (36). By freeing his patients from the horror of their wartime experiences, fostering greater self-awareness and engendering them with a sense of

purpose, Brock ensured that his patients regained their inner stability and could function as individuals in whatever role they assumed on leaving Craiglockhart.

The first phase of Craiglockhart's operations continued until the War Office inspection of November 1917, after which Bryce was relieved of his command. Official records of the inspection do not exist, but the incident is recorded in *Sherston's Progress* (1936), the third volume of Sassoon's *George Sherston* trilogy. According to *Sherston's Progress*, the inspection went awry after Bryce decided 'that that the general should, just for once, see a war hospital as it really was' (46). Sherston's account continues:

> the mandarin was genuinely shocked by what he inspected. He went into the kitchen and found that he couldn't see his face reflected in a single frying pan. You couldn't eat your dinner off the bathroom floors, and Sam Browne belts were conspicuous by their absence. Worst of all, most of the medical staff were occupied with their patients, instead of standing about and wasting their time for an hour or two while awaiting the arrival of their supreme therapeutic warlord. Profoundly displeased, he departed. (46-47)

This passage paints a highly unfavourable picture of the War Office inspector as being a man too scandalised by the hospital's lapses in military decorum to pay any particular attention to the medical work being carried out. Given the fact that Sassoon's account of events appears in his fictionalised narrative of his time at Craiglockhart, we might be tempted to take this account with a pinch of salt. However, the 'Notes on the Staff' vindicate his account in recording the fact that Major Bryce's dismissal proved deeply unpopular: on discovering that Bryce had been discredited and transferred, 'The Office Staff resigned their posts at the same time' (303). Rivers's departure for the Royal Air Force Hospital, Hampstead, in the very same month can be interpreted as being a further show of solidarity. In his introduction to *Instinct and the Unconscious*, Rivers praises his former colleague, writing that his time at Craiglockhart 'gave me an unrivalled opportunity for gaining experience of the psycho-neuroses of war' and that 'any use that I was able to make of that opportunity, in spite of serious

difficulties . . . [was] due to the never-failing help and encouragement of Dr. Bryce' (vi).

Rivers's reference to 'serious difficulties' blighting his time at Craiglockhart is intriguing in suggesting that the hospital's conflict with the military authorities ran deeper than a mere clash over decorum. In the article '"Dottyville"– Craiglockhart War Hospital and shell-shock treatment in the First World War', Thomas Webb makes the now oft-quoted statement that 'There was considerable antagonism between the "chief medical mandarins from the War Office" and the doctors in uniform who ran Craiglockhart', and goes on to explain that this resulted from

> a fundamental scepticism concerning diagnosis [of neurasthenia] as well as the therapeutic strategies suggested. The traditional military (and sometimes societal) view was that shell-shock sufferers were "lead-swingers" and malingerers who should be treated in an appropriately punitive fashion and not sent on holiday in the Scottish countryside. (343)

Webb's discussion touches on several potentially valid points. First, his reference to the 'doctors in uniform who ran Craiglockhart' alludes to tensions that may have resulted from the fact that those working at Craiglockhart were civilian doctors who had been promoted to medical posts within the R.A.M.C., rather than being career soldiers familiar with the military's way of doing things. Second, Webb suggests that a 'fundamental scepticism' about the psychological interpretation of shell shock may have existed, which is also certainly plausible. This is an issue that Sassoon touches on in *Sherston's Progress*, in which Rivers is described as admitting that 'the local Director of Medical Services nourished a deep-rooted prejudice against Slateford [Craiglockhart], and actually asserted that he "never had and never would recognize the existence of such a thing as shell-shock"' (15). Third, Webb's suggestion that the War Office was concerned that Craiglockhart's patients were not being treated in an 'appropriately punitive fashion' is also imminently plausible in this regard: the military authorities were perhaps concerned that there was no incentive for the men to recover if they lived so well while being treated in Edinburgh.

Based on the evidence available, however, it is most likely that the lapses in decorum witnessed by the War Office inspectorate were the reason for the hospital's regime change. The military authorities may have remained sceptical about the nature of war neuroses, but this scepticism was tempered by the growing acceptance of the psychological interpretation of the condition. As the war continued, the British Army signalled their acceptance of the psychological interpretation by modifying their procedures for the treatment and reporting of cases in light of developments within the literature. For example, from June 1917, it was required that possible mental casualties be labelled 'Not Yet Diagnosed (NYD)' in an attempt to eradicate the use of the term shell shock, which had proved so problematic in linking breakdown to proximity to either a shell blast or enemy fire. The introduction of the label 'NYD' further indicated the military's acceptance of findings reported in the medical literature. Although belated in its implementation, the issue was first identified by Frederick Mott in March 1916, the label responded to Mott's finding that patients who were labelled as mental casualties often went on to develop 'a fixed idea of never recovering', a hopelessness of mind that made treatment even more challenging ('The Effects of High Explosives' 553).

Further evidence of the fact that Craiglockhart's lapses in decorum were the cause of Bryce's dismissal can be discerned when we examine the second phase of the hospital's operations, which began when Colonel Balfour-Graham assumed control. The paucity of official records and first-hand accounts of this period of the hospital's operations makes such a task challenging; however, it is possible to draw certain conclusions about this phase of the hospital's operations based on the little remaining evidence. The first significant evidence of the fact that the hospital's therapeutic ethos was left largely unaltered is the continued presence of Brock. The continued existence of *The Hydra* serves as further evidence of the fact that the hospital's ethos of active recovery and re-education continued: the magazine was relaunched after an extensive overhaul in November 1917

and continued to thrive until July 1918. Furthermore, the article 'Edinburgh Time Gun', printed in *The Scotsman* on 4 April 1918, makes clear the fact that Colonel Balfour-Graham was no disciplinarian monster and was, like his predecessors and colleague Brock, a man who cared much about the men under his command. In the article, Balfour-Graham argues passionately in favour of abolishing the firing of Edinburgh's One O'Clock Gun, a cannon fired from the battlements at 1pm every day, for the remainder of the war. He was writing in response to reports that two of Craiglockhart's patients had collapsed in distress on Princes Street after the gun had been fired and argued that more 'heart-rending' scenes would occur if action was not taken. 'I am of opinion that anything that interferes with the comfort, well-being, health, or happiness in any shape or form of our officers and soldiers at the present time should be done away with,' he concluded, in a statement that makes clear his concern for his patients' welfare (4). Given this evidence, we can conclude that life at Craiglockhart did not change overmuch after Colonel Balfour-Graham took the reins and that strict adherence to the military's exacting standards of decorum was the price that the hospital paid for being allowed to continue in its work unhindered.

Colonel Balfour-Graham's time in charge of Craiglockhart continued until early 1918, when a second War Office inspection once again resulted in the hospital's commanding officer being replaced. Craiglockhart's final commanding officer was William Brown, a now-familiar figure who has appeared in this chapter on number of occasions. The success rates that Brown claimed to have attained while working in the field were certainly impressive. In 'The Treatment of Cases of Shell Shock in an Advanced Neurological Centre', Brown claimed that, between November 1916 and February 1918, his success rate in sending psychological cases back to duty was 70 per cent when they came under his care within 48 hours of breaking down (197). It was perhaps these statistics that led to Brown being transferred to Craiglockhart but whether this was in response to the hospital's dwindling success in returning officers to duty is unclear. As was

the case when Colonel Balfour-Graham took the reins, Brock continued to work at the hospital, this suggesting once again that the hospital's ethos remained unaffected. Rather, Craiglockhart's ethos came full circle during this final stage of its operations as the man who had originated the method of autognosis used by Rivers now came to work at the hospital himself.

Brown did not publish a formal account of his time at Craiglockhart and, as a result, the possible methods used in the treatment of his patients must be teased out of his other publications. Writing in 'The Treatment of Cases in an Advanced Neurological Centre', published on 17 August 1918, Brown stated his belief, as shared by Rivers, that officer cases were often more difficult to treat because they repressed their feelings of fear. He also acknowledged the fact that hospitals like Craiglockhart, to which more extreme cases were sent, were faced with a more complicated task due to the fact that 'Patients seen at a late stage of their illness show the well-known fixation of symptoms so conspicuous by its absence at the front' (836). Like his current colleague, Brock, and his earlier colleague, Rivers, Brown believed that his patients' health must be considered in holistic terms and considered it insufficient for a doctor to merely remove a patient's symptoms.

Autognosis was the best method by which to ensure that patients recovered fully from their symptoms and Brown summarised this in a letter to *The Lancet* that was published in 12 October 1918, while he was working at Craiglockhart. Here, he outlined the steps required in the treatment of those suffering from neurasthenia:

> Close enquiry into the patient's past history, the recall of dim memories by the method of free association, and the careful explaining to the patient as to how his symptoms have originated, together with the arousal of sthenic emotions, such as an enthusiastic expectation of cure, will suffice in these cases. To sum up the whole method I have suggested the term 'autognosis,' since it is a thoroughgoing theoretical and practical knowledge of self which makes a psychoneurosis or a psychosis impossible. ('Hypnosis in Hysteria' 505)

Brown further described that it was through the discussion of the patient's 'past mental conflicts and worries' and conversations about 'the origin of his present symptoms', that the patient was able to 'see both the past and the present experiences in their right proportions. . . . giving the patient a true insight into his mental condition' ('A Comparison of Early Cases' 836). Like both Rivers and Brock, the goal of Brown's treatment was that his patients would achieve a level of self-knowledge that ensured a return to mental stability, free from the risk of relapse that would enable them to function as individuals.

Craiglockhart War Hospital closed its doors in March 1919, the month in which the military started the process of decommissioning its hospitals after the end of the war. During its years of operation, Craiglockhart remained a progressive institution that offered its patients sensitive and enlightened treatment that attracted doctors at the forefront of their professions to work there. Given the fact that the hospital was designated for the treatment of severe cases, namely men whose treatment behind the lines in France had proved unsuccessful and whose symptoms had become fixed, its rates of successful treatment were impressive. Out of a total of 1736 patients, 53% were returned to some form of military duty after treatment: 758 returned to active service, 86 were assigned to home service and 78 to light duties. Of those who did not return to military duties, a further 141 were transferred to other institutions for on-going treatment while 735 were declared as D.M.U. ('declared medically unfit') (Webb 345).

Any words of mine, written one hundred years after the fact, cannot pay fitting tribute to the work carried out by Craiglockhart's doctors during the hospital's years of operation. Instead, Maureen Huws, the daughter of one of Craiglockhart's patients, will have the final word. In an audio interview recorded for the Imperial War Museum, Huws acknowledged the positive legacy of Craiglockhart while discussing her father's time there. Her father, John Henry Burns, was admitted to the hospital in 1917 after breaking down while fighting in Arras, France, which rendered 'his mind . . . unable to cope

with the horrors' that he had endured. Huws states that her father 'adored Craiglockhart. The tennis in the garden, and the friends — I understand some of them were with him in France. . . . He used to talk about them all the time'. She also praises the efforts expended by the hospital's staff, in stating that 'They seemed to do so much to try and bring him back to mental health'. She admits that her father continued to be troubled by his wartime memories after being discharged from the army and recalls both 'his horrific screaming and shouting in the night' and the fact that 'He was always on edge and you would never know when something would upset him terribly'. Yet despite this, she is full of praise for Craiglockhart's doctors, who worked tirelessly to ease her father's symptoms and to restore his psychic health. 'I think the care he received in Craiglockhart was immense, considering that psychiatric nursing of any kind was only in its infancy,' she concludes. 'I don't see that they could have done more' (Huws *IWM 20683*).

This chapter has introduced readers to Craiglockhart War Hospital, its staff and the therapeutic methods used there during its years of operation. This has made clear the fact that Craiglockhart was an institution whose emphasis was on providing an excellent quality of care and whose holistic focus ensured that patients were able to function meaningfully as individuals on leaving the hospital, regardless of whether they were discharged to duty or invalided out of the army. In accepting the psychological interpretation of war neuroses from the outset, Craiglockhart marked itself out as being a progressive institution, while its emphasis on the articulation of experience ensured that patients confronted the troubling emotions and wartime memories that were the cause of their condition. In the following chapter, readers will be introduced to *The Hydra*, the magazine created by patients of the hospital. There, *The Hydra* will be examined in comparison with other soldier magazines published during the First World War, thus locating it within the wider outpouring of articulation that took place during the conflict. The magazine will also be studied as a unique document of Craiglockhart's

therapeutic culture and its links to Craiglockhart's expressive therapies will be explored in greater detail.

3. *The Hydra*: The Magazine of Craiglockhart's Literary Culture

In this chapter, readers will be introduced to *The Hydra* magazine, which was produced by patients of Craiglockhart War Hospital between April 1917 and July 1918. It is a fascinating historical artefact that provides modern-day readers with a privileged insight into life at Craiglockhart. Not only does it document daily life at the hospital, the magazine also showcases the creative work produced by the patients there. The magazine is significant in general terms as it is part of the wider outpouring of soldier magazines that was occasioned by the First World War and thus participates in the wider literary culture of the conflict. *The Hydra* is also inherently valuable as both a specific document of day-to-day life at Craiglockhart and as a text that serves as the printed embodiment of the literary culture that existed at the hospital. Thus, *The Hydra* makes a unique contribution to a highly significant body of writing while simultaneously remaining one of its kind.

This chapter will examine the content of *The Hydra* in detail; discussing the magazine first in relation to the wider genre of soldier magazines published during the war and, second, as a specific document of Craiglockhart's literary culture. To this end, *The Hydra* will be compared with two other soldier magazines: *The Wipers Times* and the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*. *The Wipers Times* is the most famous, and accessible, of the trench journals produced by the British forces during the First World War. Its enduring popularity has been evidenced most recently by the publication of a new facsimile edition of the magazine's complete run, *The Wipers Times: The Famous First World War Trench Newspaper*, in 2013; the edition to which I refer throughout. Comparison of the content of *The Hydra* with that of *The Wipers Times* will allow for points of similarity and difference in the content of soldier magazines published at the front and home to be identified. The *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* is of interest as it is a soldier magazine, which, like *The Hydra*, documents an environment far removed from the front line.

In this case, it is the workings of the Second Scottish General Hospital, located in the former Craigleith Poorhouse in North Edinburgh and operational between 1914 and 1919. An incomplete print run of 13 issues, dating from June 1915 to March 1919, is held in the Lothian Health Services Archive at the University of Edinburgh. Study of these publications will allow for the identification of stylistic areas of commonality, while allowing a modern-day reader the opportunity to develop an enhanced understanding of the unique way of life at Craiglockhart and the ways in which this was manifested in print.

The Hydra, *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* and *The Wipers Times* are individual titles within the wider outpouring of articulation that was manifested in the popularity of soldier magazines during the First World War. In *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies: 1914-1918* (1990), J. G. Fuller describes the flourishing of soldier magazines as a 'trench newspaper fever' that swept through the troops, who were 'aware of taking part in great events . . . [and] wanted to preserve a record of their thoughts and experiences, both for themselves and for history' (7; 15). *The Hydra* justified its existence in precisely these terms in the editorial of its first issue, published on 28 April 1917. Here, the editor stated that 'This is an age devoted very widely to literary endeavours of all kinds' and explained that the magazine was brought into existence following 'a generally expressed desire among the staff and patients . . . for some sort of magazine'.[1]

The widespread popularity of soldier magazines was facilitated by the fact that the period was one in which high levels of literacy made it possible for magazines to be read and appreciated by a wide audience. This was facilitated, in the previous century, by the Education Act of 1870 and Elementary Education Act of 1880. As a result, the majority of the British population was literate by the turn of the twentieth century (*The Victorian Age* 1034). Paul Fussell explores the literariness of the First World War in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, in which he states that 'By 1914, it was

possible for soldiers to be not merely literate but vigorously literary' and identifies that literature was held in high regard at the time as it offered the potential for social mobility and personal growth (157). As a result, the First World War was the first conflict in which vast numbers of educated civilian soldiers entered the warzone (Gray 56).

The scale on which soldier publications were produced is staggering. In his discussion of soldier magazines in 'British Army Trench Journals and a Geography of Identity', John Pegum identifies that soldier magazines 'were produced by units of almost every branch of the services and on almost every Front' (129). Neither was the urge to document wartime experience limited to the British forces: titles produced by other combatant nations included *Die Kriegszeitung* (Germany), *Le Poilu* (France), *The Dinkum Oil* (Australia) and *The Listening Post* (Canada). In *Troop Morale and Popular Culture*, Fuller identifies that a total of 107 distinct soldier magazines were published by British and Dominion forces during the First World War (11). He also provides evidence that makes clear the potential of soldier magazine to reach a sizeable audience: the May 1916 issue of the 7th Manchesters magazine sold 26,000 copies, while the October 1916 issue of the 7th Canadians magazine, *The Listening Post*, sold 20,000 copies on the Western Front (9). Of all the combatant nations, the French were the most prolific creators of soldier magazines, creating up to 400 distinct titles during the war (Audoin-Rouzeau 25). It was the Germans who had the greatest production capacity. Thanks to the fact that their distribution was overseen by professionals, over one million magazines were produced per month on the Western Front in 1916-1917 and over two million were distributed on the Eastern Front (Nelson 175).

Hospital magazines were created in a very different environment to the magazines produced at the front. Their editors and contributors were working from a place of safety, could devote significant time to the creation of their endeavours and had professional equipment at their disposal, such as by having access to professional printing companies. Not for them was

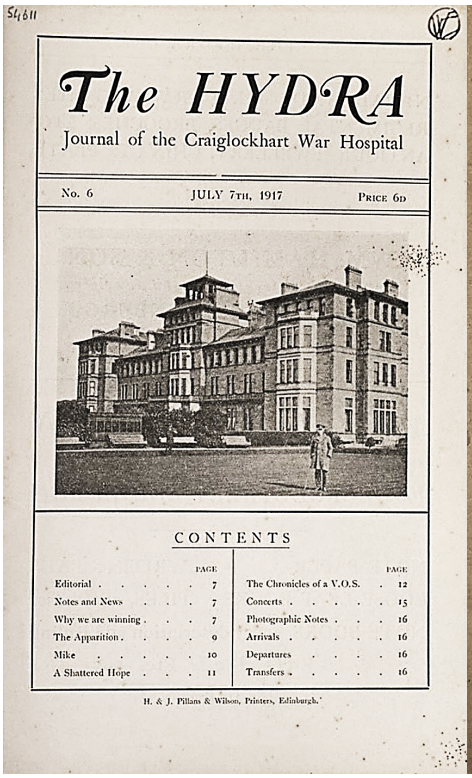
the excuse made by Captain Fred Roberts, editor of *The Wipers Times,* in the very first issue of the magazine! Writing in the editorial of the 12 February 1916 issue, he blamed a nearby shell blast for 'Any little shortcoming in production' because 'pieces of metal of various sizes had punctured our press'.[2] In *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain during the Great War*, Jeffrey Reznick identifies that fewer than 40 hospital magazines were produced during the First World War. Though only a small number of these publications existed, the fact that they were produced in the safety of Britain meant that these magazines enjoyed longer print runs: it was typical for hospital magazines to exist in a print run of around twelve issues (67). *The Hydra* magazine thus enjoyed an above-average longevity, as it existed for a total of 19 issues. The magazine's links to Craiglockhart's therapeutic ethos no doubt contributed to its long life; the hospital's creatively-minded patients were encouraged to involve themselves in the magazine's production as part of their ergotherapy. Sales of the magazine, too, were crucial in ensuring *The Hydra*'s longevity, as revenues created by sales of magazine were invested into the production of future issues. It was to this end that the magazine was sold not only at Craiglockhart and Bowhill Hospital, its adjunct hospital in the Scottish Borders: *The Hydra* was also sold at various locations around Edinburgh, including the bookstalls in Waverley Station and the Caledonian Station, and five booksellers in the City Centre.

Regardless of the location in which they were produced, soldier magazines were highly valued documents of experience, as is evidenced by their aesthetic appearance. The appearance of *The Wipers Times* is remarkable, given the fact that it was printed at various locations around the front line. Not only did the magazine's editors have to contend with the dangers of life at the front, a shortage of materials made production challenging. The shortage of letters for typesetting, for example, is evidenced by the misspelling of certain words within the magazine. This includes the magazine's title, which had as much to do with a shortage of

y's as it did with replicating the British troops rendering of the pronunciation of 'Ypres'. Yet despite these challenges, *The Wipers Times* existed for a total of 23 issues over a period of almost three years. Each issue was typeset in pages of two columns with varied fonts and featured large mock advertisements and occasional hand-drawings in addition to letters, poetry and serials.

The high standards of professionalism evident in both *The Hydra* and *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*'s appearance were facilitated by the fact that both magazines were created in the relative comfort of Britain. Here, the conditions under which issues were assembled were less challenging and significant time could be devoted to the preparation of each issue. The magazine's editorial teams also benefitted from having access to professional printing services: *The Hydra* was printed by the Edinburgh printing company H. &. J. Pillans & Wilson. Once again, an emphasis on the aesthetic appearance of the magazines is a common feature. Both have visually appealing covers, are carefully typeset and include specially created artistic content. Throughout the print run of the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, for example, the main text is complemented by numerous original drawings and many articles begin with beautifully designed initial letters. *The Hydra*, too, was published to a high standard. In its first run, dating from the 28 April to the 29 September 1917, the magazine's cover featured a photograph of an officer standing on the hospital's lawn and a table of contents, while the content of the magazine was printed in a two-column layout. After an extensive overhaul, carried out in October 1917, the magazine was relaunched as a 'New Series' in November. The magazine's cover now featured an artwork created by hospital patient Adrian Berrington, which depicted a striking image of a soldier grappling with the mythical many-headed Hydra. While the magazine's title alluded to the hospital's former status as hydropathic, or 'hydro', the mythical Hydra served as a symbol of the neurasthenia from which the hospital's patients suffered. The many heads of the Hydra represented the wide range of

symptoms associated with the condition, while the Hydra's ability to regenerate a head that had been cut off symbolised the threat of relapse with which the hospital's staff had to contend.



The HYDRA

Journal of the Craiglockhart War Hospital

No. 6 JULY 7TH, 1917 PRICE 6D

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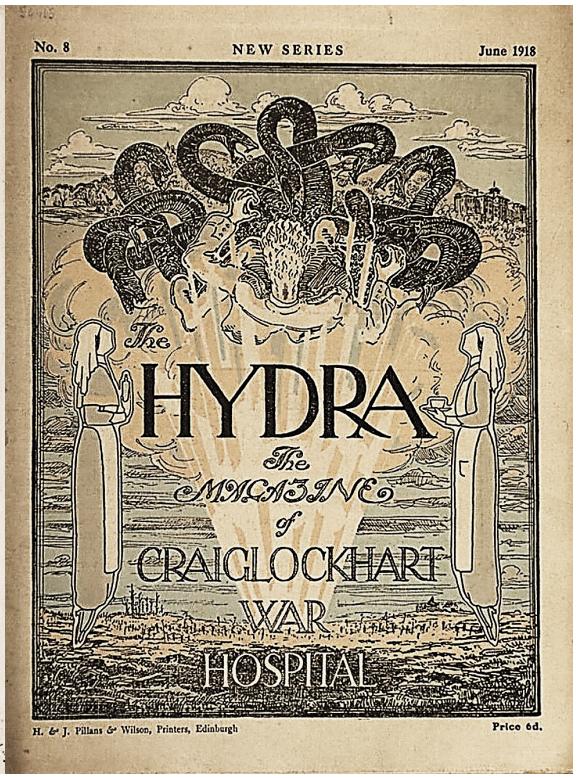
H. & J. Pillans & Wilson, Printers, Edinburgh.



No. 8 NEW SERIES June 1918

The HYDRA

The MAGAZINE of CRAIGLOCKHART WAR HOSPITAL

H. & J. Pillans & Wilson, Printers, Edinburgh Price 6d.

Figures 1 & 2 The cover of *The Hydra* in its first and second print runs. These items are from the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, University of Oxford (www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit); © English Faculty Library, University of Oxford.

In *The Hydra*'s 'New Series', the magazine's content was presented in a more aesthetically pleasing format. The magazine's content was now published on a single page without columns and Berrington's pen and ink drawings were used throughout as illustrations. A pen and ink drawing of men standing beside their pigeon holes checking for post headed the 'Notes and News' section, for example, while other drawings used included those depicting members of the Field Club walking the hills, a golfer teeing off and a man performing onstage at one of the hospital's concerts.

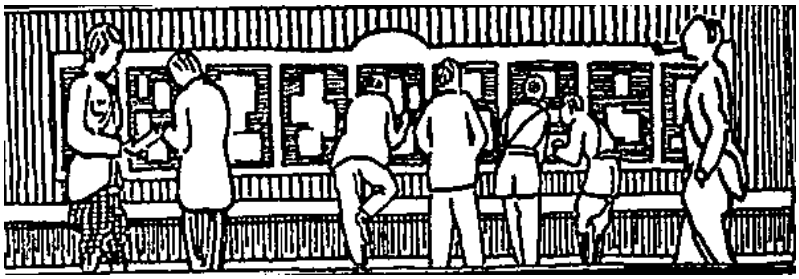


Figure 3 Berrington's illustration for the 'Notes and News' section of *The Hydra*'s 'New Series'.

The content of soldier magazines was likewise shaped by the environment in which they were produced. For magazines published at the front, close proximity to the enemy necessitated the need for self-censorship due to the risk of copies falling into enemy hands and betraying vital information. The need for magazines to be circumspect about their inclusion of specific information was playfully alluded to in the title of *The Wipers Times*. Here, 'Wipers' referred to the battalion's close proximity to the Belgian town of Ypres, whose name the British troops mispronounced as 'Wipers'. The complete print run of the magazine is now known as *The Wipers Times*, but it is worth noting that only four out of the magazine's 23 issues have that title. As the 12th Sherwood Foresters were moved around the line, the magazine's title was altered accordingly. The magazine became *The Somme Times* for the 31 July 1916 issue and the *New Church Times* in a winking reference to the battalion's proximity to the village of Neuve-Église between 20 March 1916 and 29 May 1916. After the war's end, the final two issues were renamed *Better Times* as the magazine's editorial team and contributors looked towards a peaceful future.

In hospital magazines published in the safety of Britain, in comparison, life could be documented in detail and a vivid account of experience provided for posterity. The high level of documentary detail included in *The Hydra* provides modern readers with a privileged insight into life at the

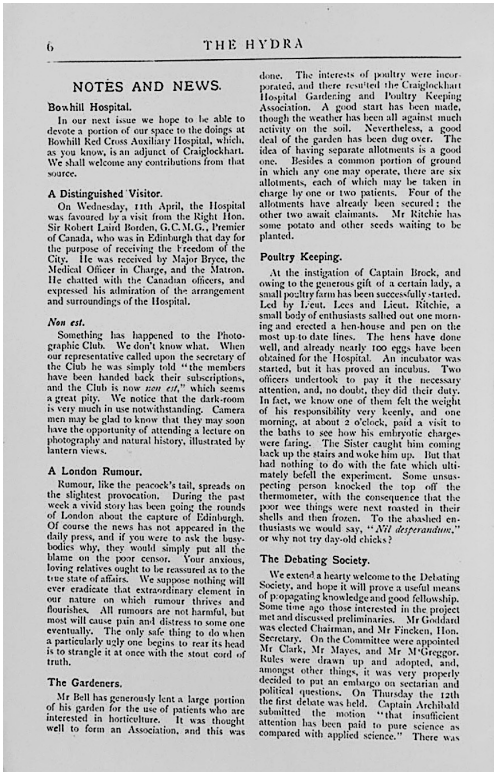
hospital. The accounts of hospital life include descriptions of the numerous activities in which patients took part and reviews of the hospital's weekly Saturday night concerts, all of which are peppered with the sort of incidental details from which memories are made. In *The Soldiers' Press: Trench Journals in the First World War*, Graham Seal acknowledges that the inclusion of such material 'performed the essential task of manifesting the otherwise unstated sense of belonging and identity that most members of the group were likely to share' (189). Thus, *The Hydra*'s detailed accounts of hospital life embodied the sense of community that existed at Craiglockhart and further cemented the bonds that existed between patients by describing the realities of their everyday experiences. An amusing example of the level of often anecdotal detail included in the magazine can be found in the description of an epic tennis match played between the hospital's C.O. Major Bryce and a patient named Mr. Bishop, which ends with the announcement that 'Both players left the courts tired and bathed in perspiration, to find that Major Bryce should not have played Bishop at all!!!'.[3] Another comical account is included in one of the concert reviews, in which a skit performed by the 'Hydropathic Pair' is described. Here, we learn that the role of 'Mr Craig' was performed with the 'squirmy suggestiveness of Charlie Chaplin', while the author of the article confesses that 'it took us some time to make sure that "Madame Lockhart" . . . contained, somewhere beneath her ample bosom, our old friend Captain Gilling. He twisted both leg and larynx with extraordinary effect'.[4]

Soldier magazines published at the front likewise sought to document life and articulate the realities of wartime experience. However, due to the need to be circumspect regarding the inclusion of specific information, life was documented in general terms. This can be seen in the creative content of *The Wipers Times*, in which generalised descriptions of experience predominate. The poem 'Minor Worries' was published in the 1 May 1916 issue of the magazine, which was at that point masquerading as the *New Church Times*. The first stanza is reproduced in full below:

If the Hun lets off some gas —
Never mind.
If the Hun attacks in mass —
Never mind.
If your dug-out's blown to bits,
Or the C.O.'s throwing fits,
Or a crump your rum jar hits —
Never mind.[5]

What *The Wipers Times* lost in being unable to document wartime experiences in specific detail, it made up for by describing trench life in terms that all the readers of the magazine would recognise. What soldier on active service was unfamiliar with the threat of being gassed, being attacked by the enemy or, heaven forbid, losing their rum jar to an exploding shell? Further examples of creative content that describes front line experience in general terms can be found in poems such as 'God Speed', which described the war as being 'a grim hard school' where hardships are countered by the bonds that exist between soldiers in the line: 'a pal of the dug-out's a friend worth while'.[6] The poem 'Stick It' likewise urges soldiers to maintain their morale in spite of the difficult circumstances that they must endure. Despite 'soaking in mud, half dead with cold' and being 'shelled day and night', the poet tells readers to remain positive: 'if you grin / And carry on, we're sure to win'.[7] In all three examples, experience is documented in general terms that nevertheless conform to the important function of soldier magazines as identified by Seal. Every reader would recognise their own experiences in the content printed and, as a result, feel himself to be a member of his wider community of soldiers whose experiences were identical to this own.

The Hydra, in comparison with *The Wipers Times*, could document experience without the need for censorship, and it did so in striking detail. Of particular interest is the 'Notes and News' section, in which the activities of the various clubs and societies active at the hospital are described at length.



6 THE HYDRA

NOTES AND NEWS.

Bowhill Hospital.

In our next issue we hope to be able to devote a portion of our space to the doings at Bowhill Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital, which, as you know, is an adjunct of Craiglockhart. We shall welcome any contributions from that source.

A Distinguished Visitor.

On Wednesday, 11th April, the Hospital was favoured by a visit from the Right Hon. Sir Robert Laird Borden, G.C.M.G., Premier of Canada, who was in Edinburgh that day for the purpose of receiving the Freedom of the City. He was received by Major Bryce, the Medical Officer in Charge, and the Matron. He chatted with the Canadian officers, and expressed his admiration of the arrangement and surroundings of the Hospital.

Non est.

Something has happened to the Photographic Club. We don't know what. When our representative called upon the secretary of the Club he was simply told "the members have been handed back their subscriptions, and the Club is now *non est*," which seems a great pity. We notice that the dark-room is very much in use notwithstanding. Camera men may be glad to know that they may soon have the opportunity of attending a lecture on photography and natural history, illustrated by lantern views.

A London Rumour.

Rumour, like the peacock's tail, spreads on the slightest provocation. During the past week a vivid story has been going the rounds of London about the capture of Edinburgh. Of course the news has not appeared in the daily press, and if you were to ask the busybodies why, they would simply put all the blame on the poor censor. Your anxious, loving relatives ought to be reassured as to the true state of affairs. We suppose nothing will ever eradicate that extraordinary element in our nature on which rumour thrives and flourishes. All rumours are not harmful, but most will cause pain and distress to some one eventually. The only safe thing to do when a particularly ugly one begins to rear its head is to strangle it at once with the stout cord of truth.

The Gardeners.

Mr Bell has generously lent a large portion of his garden for the use of patients who are interested in horticulture. It was thought well to form an Association, and this was done. The interests of poultry were incorporated, and there resulted the Craiglockhart Hospital Gardening and Poultry Keeping Association. A good start has been made, though the weather has been all against much activity on the soil. Nevertheless, a good deal of the garden has been dug over. The idea of having separate allotments is a good one. Besides a common portion of ground in which any one may operate, there are six allotments, each of which may be taken in charge by one or two patients. Four of the allotments have already been secured; the other two await claimants. Mr Ritchie has some potato and other seeds waiting to be planted.

Poultry Keeping.

At the instigation of Captain Brock, and owing to the generous gift of a certain lady, a small poultry farm has been successfully started. Led by Lieut. Lees and Lieut. Ritchie, a small body of enthusiasts sallied out one morning and erected a hen-house and pen on the most up-to-date lines. The hens have done well, and already nearly 100 eggs have been obtained for the Hospital. An incubator was started, but it has proved an incubus. Two officers undertook to pay it the necessary attention, and, no doubt, they did their duty. In fact, we know one of them felt the weight of his responsibility very keenly, and one morning, at about 2 o'clock, paid a visit to the baths to see how his embryotic charges were faring. The Sister caught him coming back up the stairs and woke him up. But that had nothing to do with the fate which ultimately befell the experiment. Some unsuspecting person knocked the top off the thermometer, with the consequence that the poor wee things were next roasted in their shells and then frozen. To the abashed enthusiasts we would say, "*Nil desperandum*," or why not try day-old chicks?

The Debating Society.

We extend a hearty welcome to the Debating Society, and hope it will prove a useful means of propagating knowledge and good fellowship. Some time ago those interested in the project met and discussed preliminaries. Mr Goddard was elected Chairman, and Mr Fincken, Hon. Secretary. On the Committee were appointed Mr Clark, Mr Mayes, and Mr M'Greggor. Rules were drawn up and adopted, and, amongst other things, it was very properly decided to put an embargo on sectarian and political questions. On Thursday the 12th the first debate was held. Captain Archibald submitted the motion "that insufficient attention has been paid to pure science as compared with applied science." There was

Figure 4 A 'Notes and News' page from *The Hydra*'s first issue (28 April 1917). This item is from the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, University of Oxford (www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit); © English Faculty Library, University of Oxford.

Documented in this portion of *The Hydra* are the activities of the photography club, field club, debating society, model yacht club and the gardening and poultry keeping association, among others. The sports played by patients are also described and include detailed accounts of the patients' exploits in golfing, cricket, badminton and lawn tennis. These accounts are so detailed as to take up multiple pages in what was a relatively modest publication and the banal level of detail is further intriguing. Why was so much space devoted to such intricately detailed accounts of these activities, which often included reminders to patients that they should straighten shuttlecock feathers after playing badminton and remember to lower the net on the tennis court at the end of play?

In *Troop Morale and Popular Culture*, Fuller identifies that pastimes, playing sports and attending concerts were enduringly popular activities among soldiers on active service (85; 96). He further identifies that the

popularity of sports, in particular, was reflected in the content of soldier magazines, which published detailed accounts of popular sports and matches that were played (87). Fuller concludes his discussion of the popularity of such pursuits by stating that such activities were highly significant to the men who participated in them as 'Entertainments acted to dissipate boredom and anxiety, but also, at a deeper level, to assuage the men's craving for the brightness and pleasure of civilian life' (103). Graham Seal takes this point further by identifying that such activities performed a consolatory function for soldiers on active service due to the fact that 'At the front, sports, pastimes and the regularities of the calendar provided the necessary comforts of the known' (*Soldiers' Press* 54). By taking part in the same leisure activities that had previously been enjoyed in peacetime, therefore, soldiers were comforted by their familiarity. Additionally, as identified by Seal, their links with 'regularity' were also important. Not only did concerts and sports matches take place on certain days of the week, such as in the case of Craiglockhart's weekly Saturday night concerts, but the predictable and ordered nature of these activities was also reassuring. Both at the front and in military hospitals, therefore, activities that reminded soldiers of home countered the tendency of life on active service to be disordered and disturbing.

We can now understand *The Hydra*'s inclusion of detailed accounts of familiar pastimes and activities as being the printed manifestation, the articulation, if you will, of the hospital's patients desire to order experience. Craiglockhart's patients shared with other soldiers the general experience of leaving their previous lives behind and having to adapt to the rigours and challenges of life as a soldier, a process in which the previous order of their lives was disrupted. In addition, each of Craiglockhart's patients had experienced a more profound disruption of order: they had broken down on active service. Engaging in activities ordered by the calendar or the imposition of rules and conventions was therefore a means of externally

ordering experience at a time when patients' internal order was profoundly disturbed.

The ordering of distressing experience can also be seen in *The Wipers Times*. In 'Golf Notes', featured in the very first issue dating from 12 February 1917, for example, the familiar form of a sporting review allows violent wartime experience to be described in familiar terms. As a result, the violence of trench warfare is normalised as a result of it being conflated with a familiar activity and its horror is reduced:

> The course . . . has been planned almost entirely on the pot-bunker system. . . . The second hole . . . was noticeable only for the extraordinary pungent odour which assailed the nostrils near the green, and which affected the putting of both players. . . . The 17th saw the end of an exciting match . . . Boschun had gone forward to see his line, and Tom played a beauty, which caught Willhelm full in the face and finished him.[8]

That the desire to order recent, disordered events experienced in war was a means of providing reassurance in difficult times is confirmed in the pages of the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*. While similar to *The Hydra* in also exhaustively detailing hospital events, concerts and sporting activities in each issue, the magazine extends its documentary function to incorporate accounts of military structures. Examined in light of the urge to order distressing experience, the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*'s inclusion of serialised accounts such as 'Notes on the Army' by Major D. J. Graham and 'The Story of Some Regiments' by J. A. MacDougall, M.D., is telling.[9&10] Both articles provide detailed information about regimental history, uniforms, badges, weaponry and military formalities over a number of pages, complete with pictures – such as those identifying different military brassards or regimental badges. While these articles certainly proved informative and interesting, and a potential source of pride for patients who found their own division or regiment being described, both can be read as being a further manifestation of the desire of soldiers to enforce order on an otherwise disordered experience. In emphasising military history, structure and order, these regimental and military histories emphasise the 'known' in

portraying to readers an image of military rules, order and formalities: one perhaps quite at odds with what many had experienced at the front. The breakdown of military order under the pressures of the front line is described by Private R. J. Bultitude, whose reflections on the war were published in *On the Front Line: True First World War Stories* in 1930. Recalling a retreat in late March 1918, Pte Bultitude recalls that:

> the retreat resolved itself into a test of endurance. The battalion managed to keep more or less together, but there was no pretence at any sort of order. Some had to drop out, either through exhaustion or wounds, sometimes stragglers from other regiments joined us or were overtaken. (Lewis 234)

The *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*'s publishing of accounts of military and regimental history, therefore, can be identified as performing an important function for the hospital's community of injured men. Given that the readership of the magazine comprised wounded men who had recently confronted the 'unknown' of military experience, in which men were vaporised by shells, attacking formations were torn asunder by gunfire and in which companies and battalions were decimated, such accounts offered comfort through the reassurance of order.

The desire to present an ordered vision of military experience is not merely prominent in the documentary content of soldier magazines; it is also expressed in the magazines' creative content. Serials were the most popular form of prose published in *The Wipers Times* and the titles printed include 'Herlock Sholmes', 'Narpoo Rum' and 'From Bugler Boy to Brigadier or How Willie Pritchard Rose from the Ranks'. By publishing serials in *The Wipers Times*, the magazine's editors no doubt wished to offer on-going entertainment to their readers while also seeking to encourage continued readership of their magazine. Serials also reinforced bonds of shared experience by documenting a reality that readers would be familiar with, examples of which include Herlock Sholmes's delight at receiving a despatch containing concrete information, the mocking of the stereotype of

the cheerful Tommy in the ever cheerful character of ‘Inthapink’ and ‘Narpoo Rum’’s narrative preoccupation with the attempt to locate a missing rum ration. The popularity of serials can also be interpreted as being another manifestation of soldiers’ desire for order. A serialised publication, by its very nature, provided its readers with the reassurance of continuation due to the fact that further instalments would be published at set intervals in the future. For soldiers at the front, whose lives were disordered and unpredictable, serials served both as a reminder of pre-war life and as an ordering structure that resonated on a more personal level with their desire for a continuation of their own lives.

Soldier alphabets were another means by which the disordered experience of life on active service could be countered. An example of this is ‘A “B.-E.-F.” Alphabet’, published in *The Wipers Times*, then masquerading as *The B.E.F. Times*, on 5 March 1917. Here, ‘F’ stands for the frustration caused by uneven and submerged duckboards, with the speaker observing that, ‘I notice they’ve caused a particular blend / Of language here in the trenches’ and ‘P’ stands for the infestations of ‘Pediculi’ (lice) that ‘make themselves happy in trousers and vests; / Though dear little fellows, they’re unwelcome guests’. The emotional strains of front line life are also described: the letter ‘W’ describes the ‘Whizz-Bangs [German field artillery shells] that contribute to make life Hell / At various times in the trenches’.[11] Here, the use of the alphabet is an ordering structure that allows for the realities of wartime experience to be articulated within an ordered frame. The use of the alphabet is a fascinating vehicle for expression as it embodies both the repression and articulation of experience. The alphabet allows for 26 aspects of experience to be described but prevents the author from going further, thus limiting the aspects of war experience that can be articulated. A soldier alphabet thus serves an important function in allowing its creator to engage with, and articulate experience, while limiting the potential for such an act of articulation to cause distress.

Columns such as ‘Things We Want to Know’ and ‘Army Terms and Their Derivation’ can also be interpreted as manifesting soldiers’ desire for order. They are frequently used to voice men’s frustrations that their expectations of military service and its realities were frequently dissimilar. This is evidenced by the definition of ‘trench’ that appears in the 15 August 1917 issue of *The B.E.F. Times*: ‘TRENCH – So called from the trenchant remarks from those inhabiting them’.[12] Here, the word ‘trench’ has more to do with the acerbic comments made by those living in them than the physical space of the trenches themselves. ‘Things We Want to Know’ columns also appear to have been used as a means of venting the frustrations that soldiers felt regarding the lack of concrete information at the front, as suggested in *The Wipers Times*’s question as to ‘Whether any division has been offered to the “great ones” to retake Lille, Brussels, or Antwerp?’, which signals a lack of information regarding which division will be next to go into the firing line.[13]

In hospital magazines, too, the desire for order was echoed in the magazines’ creative content and adapted to suit the context in which the magazines were written. In the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, as in *The Wipers Times*, soldier alphabets proved enduringly popular. In ‘A Private’s Alphabet’, published in the magazine’s January 1915 issue, the alphabet is once again used to order experience. Here, however, its content is noticeably different to that of the aforementioned ‘A “B.-E.-F.” Alphabet’. Here, the alphabet is used to justify the British troops’ mission in the war, reinforce patriotic ideals and state the speaker’s faith in an Allied victory: ‘B is the Battle we wage against wrong’, ‘I is the Island we all love the most’ and ‘V is the Victory which we all must win, / Marching along to the town of Berlin’.[14] Here, we can understand the aim of this alphabet as being identical to that of those printed in *The Wipers Times*: the structure of both serves to contain negative experience while at the same time maintaining the connections that existed between men bonded together through adversity. Given the fact that the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* was read by an audience of recuperating soldiers, this shift in emphasis towards the

description of patriotic ideas and the mission of soldiers was crucial. Given that the majority of the magazine's readership would return to active service after recovering, it was important that their fighting spirit be maintained and the positive aspects of experience, such as camaraderie and the possibility of victory, be emphasised. 'Things We Want to Know' columns also retained their popularity in the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, where the patients' desire to seek out as much information about their current circumstances as possible was manifested the reams of gossip printed therein. A particularly wonderful example is the question 'Was it intentional, or a remarkable stroke of luck, that the N.C.O. should run out of petrol at Cramond, and did the smart young lady in the side-car object?'.[15]

On examining issues of *The Hydra* for the forms of creative content that proved so popular in both *The Wipers Times* and the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, one is struck by the fact of their relative absence. *The Hydra* has only one serial, 'The Chronicles of a V.O.S. ("Very Old Subaltern")', by 'Jack Point', one 'Military Terms Defined' column and soldier alphabets are noticeable by their absence. Closer examination of 'The Chronicle of a V.O.S. ("Very Old Subaltern")' and the magazine's only list of 'Military Terms Defined' enables us to conclude that the medical condition suffered by Craiglockhart's patients may have been the very reason that such forms proved unpopular.

'The Chronicle of a V.O.S. ("Very Old Subaltern")' is arguably doomed from the outset in that it sets out to provide an account of military experience, as is made clear by its focus on the experiences of a subaltern. From the very first instalment, printed in *The Hydra*'s 26 May 1917 issue, however, this focus is problematic. The crucial moment comes when the author sets out to describe an attack on the enemy but is unable to do so: 'the whole thing from here on is very blurry in my memory', he confesses.[16] The final sentence of the first instalment reveals the key to the problem: 'A thing like a jam-pot on a stick bounced and fell at my feet—there was an

explosion—and now the Medical Boards smile and the battalion eleven can dispense with my services'.[17]

The narrative of 'The Chronicle of a V.O.S. ("Very Old Subaltern")' is destined to fail because it was written by a man still suffering from neurasthenia. The author's reluctance to think directly about the war is indicated by the narrator's inability to remember events clearly, while his description of a grenade as being a 'jam-pot on a stick' suggests that the writer is linguistically distancing himself from reality. The use of parenthesis to contain the moment of trauma is also telling, as the explosion that occasioned the narrator's breakdown is bracketed off from the rest of the sentence. By doing so, the author quite literally removes the moment of trauma from his narrative account because he either cannot, or will not, describe it. The author's reluctance, or inability, to engage in the contemplation of wartime experience is further emphasised by the fact that the tale is broken off at this point. In writing '*To be continued*', the author both narratively and physically distances himself from events that are clearly still imbued with the power to cause distress and denies himself the possibility of articulating his troubling memories.

The disordered nature of Craiglockhart's patients' inner reality, as disrupted by neurasthenia, might also account for the lack of soldier alphabets and 'Things We Want to Know' columns. Having broken down on active service, the hospital's patients were all too aware of the fact that not only external order could be destroyed in wartime. A serial; an ordered version of experience that promised continuation, a soldier's alphabet; in which wartime experience was defined and contained, and 'Things We Want to Know' columns; in which rumour and gossip was printed, perhaps meant little to men whose minds had been broken by the war.

Craiglockhart's patients were men whose quest for order was more problematic: they sought the restoration of their mental equilibrium. An entry in *The Hydra*'s only 'Military Terms Defined' article, published in the 12 May 1917 issue, suggests the struggles that the hospital's patients endured in

this respect. The entry in question is only four words long: 'Cardigan – See Under Tunic'.[18] Some readers might chuckle at this, presuming it to be a farcical statement of simple fact or a facetious reference to the military's strict dress code. However, this definition can also be read this an allusion to the poor state of the neurasthenic soldier who is so undone by his wartime experiences that he can no longer dress himself. If interpreted thus, we can understand the absence of popular ordering structures in *The Hydra* as resulting from the particular experience of Craiglockhart's patients: what use were ordering structures to men who were rendered incapable of even dressing themselves?

The relative absence of the forms of creative content so popular in the wider soldiers' press suggests that the tension between the repression and articulation of experience shaped the content of *The Hydra*. Though the magazine existed as a vehicle for the articulation of experience, it is evident that patients struggled to do so as a result of their neurasthenia. Yet despite the existence of this tension, which alludes to the mental and emotional strain suffered by Craiglockhart's patients, the magazine nonetheless maintained a light and humorous tone, a stylistic emphasis that it shared with both *The Wipers Times* and the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle.*

Vivien Noakes identifies the importance of humour for the troops in her introduction to *Voices of Silence: The Alternative Book of First World War Poetry*. Here, she identifies that humour was 'an almost instinctive mechanism for spiritual and emotional survival' (xii). Likewise, in his introduction to *The Wipers Times: The Complete Series of the Famous Wartime Trench Newspaper*, Malcolm Brown agrees that humour was an essential coping mechanism for the soldiers of the First World War. He argues that 'We have become so convinced of the hell[ish nature of the war] that we have forgotten there could also be laughter. Indeed, it was the laughter … that made the hell tolerable' (x). Thus, as identified by Noakes and Brown, humour was an important coping mechanism which helped soldiers to remain resilient in the face of the strains of wartime experience.

In '"Sticking to a Hateful Task": Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage, 1914 – 1918', Edward Madigan confirms that there were differences in the types of articulation deemed appropriate in the public versus private spheres. Soldiers would write in a more emotionally frank manner in their private accounts, while being more light-hearted in their interactions with others (93). The realm of private communication, then, was the more appropriate place for introspection and emotional honesty, while the public sphere was one where the 'stoically cheerful and the communal were generally preferred to the personal and the reflective' (Seal 8).

The public nature of *The Hydra* thus accounts for the humourous tone that prevails in the magazine, which runs the gamut from slapstick to the black humour characteristic of *The Wipers Times.* Some of the humourous articles published in the magazine are played strictly for laughs, such as the short story 'Causa Belli' by 'Synjin'. Here, a special constable returns from his beat in 'Pickle Street', having got himself into a pickle of his own, 'his uniform, much bespattered, and his face…beyond recognition' after being caught canoodling with the wife of a man who was not, as he had assumed, away on active service in Mesopotamia.[19] Humour is also in evidence in the in-jokes and anecdotes peppered throughout the magazine, as can be seen in Wilfred Owen's editorial from the 4 August 1917 issue. Here, he describes his fellow patients taking advantage of their tram breaking down while on the way back to the hospital. '[C]ertain Hydraens saw an opportunity for a little shopping,' he writes, 'and took in their nightly provisions of gas mantles, biscuits, tea, cocoa, and possibly other beverages, such as ***.' There follows an editorial aside that makes clear his complicity: '[*This word is deficient in proof – Ed*]'.[20] We are left to assume that the men in question disappeared into the nearest pub while Owen honours the bonds of camaraderie by maintaining a diplomatic silence!

As identified by Noakes and Brown, humour performed an important function among soldiers in enabling them to cope with the hardships of

experience, not merely by provoking laughter. In this sense, Fuller explains, humour acted as a pressure valve which allowed for negative experiences and annoyances to be expressed without damaging morale (*Troop Morale* 24). The proliferation of complaints included in *The Hydra* marks the hospital's patients out as being a community of accomplished grousers, who were quick to express their frustrations with various aspects of their experiences at Craiglockhart. Complaints were made about the number of baths that patients are made to take, these being 'in a number insultin' to such as you an' me', while even the stoical 'Marcus Aurelius in Hospital' couldn't resist roasting the city's taxi drivers as he lamented the fact that 'the short way is not that which the taxi-men take from the Street of Princes to the Hospital'.[21&22] Complaints about the quality of the hospital's food also proved enduringly popular. One issue offered readers a prize for 'who can tell what the cook *does* with the soup', while the cook came in for further flak in another, where it was announced:

> That a new and original system of securing variety of menu has been discovered by the cook. That it works out as follows:—
> Shepherd's Pie Steam Pudding Rice pudding
> Steam Pudding Rice Pudding Shepherd's Pie
> Rice pudding Shepherd's Pie Steam Pudding
> etc., etc.[23&24]

Even the editor of *The Hydra* was not immune to complaining about the poor culinary state of affairs at the hospital. In a rather magnificent editorial wail in the 23 June 1917 issue, he complained that the hospital's residents would shortly 'be reduced to imploring a paternal government to send us back again to the front to save us from starvation, and the medical boards of the future may be empowered to pass us for "General Service and a pound of tea"'.[25]

Contributors to soldier magazines did not merely use humour as a means of venting their frustrations with their immediate circumstances, however. In *The Hydra*, *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* and *The Wipers Times*, soldiers used humour as a means of expressing their annoyances with war experience more generally. A figure who was the object of much vitriol in

The Wipers Times was Hilaire Belloc, who worked both for the War Propaganda Bureau and as a war correspondent for the journal *Land and Water*. His jingoistic reporting was frequently lampooned in *The Wipers Times*, where his inaccurate reporting of the war was roundly mocked. The article 'Proof that we are winning the War' presents the findings of Belary Helloc, who reports on the Allies' progress in the war thus far. After examining the state of Germany's fighting forces, which includes the statistic that '8,000,000 are killed or being killed', he concludes that 'there are 15 men on the Western Front' and predicts 'the collapse of the Western Campaign'.[26] The 3 July issue of *The Kemmel Times* does away with lengthy mocking of the press coverage of the conflict and merely asks, piquantly, 'Whether the London papers are aware that there are a few BRITISH troops on the western front???'.[27]

While the use of humour to facilitate complaint was important in soldier magazines generally, Craiglockhart's doctors would have been heartened indeed to see evidence of their patients articulating their negative experiences within *The Hydra.* Any articulation of negative experience, no matter how trivial, was evidence of the fact that patients were willing to engage with their emotional experiences and thereby reduce their exposure to additional strain. Craiglockhart's doctors would also have been pleased to read accounts in which patients complained about more general aspects of experience, as this indicated that patients were engaging with their wider environment, as encouraged by ergotherapy.

An example of patients engaging with the negative aspects of wider experience can be found in the complaint published in the 9 June 1917 issue of *The Hydra*, which bemoaned the fact that Craiglockhart was home to 'the most grossly underpaid elements of the community'.[28] Here, the act of comparing the experience of soldiers' to those of civilians serves as an indication of the fact that the patient was looking outside his own experience and considering it in relation to the wider environment. This is likewise the case in the editorial of the 1 September 1917 issue, in which

Wilfred Owen criticises the popular press's reporting of the war by stating that 'as for the dainty newspaper jokes concerning the men in the mud, we could not see them at all'.[29] Here, Owen vents his annoyance that the press would belittle the suffering of soldiers by suggesting that the intended humour of the newspaper jokes fails to make soldiers laugh because the 'men in the mud', the objects of the jokes, cannot be seen in the quagmire.

The press's portrayal of the war is also criticised in the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* by writers weary of the way that the war was being reported to those at home. The article 'In the Trenches: From a Patient's Diary' launches a particularly scathing attack on the press. Here, once again, the writer uses humour while venting his anger, but his indignation and fury remains powerfully evident. He states that:

> If you have read the newspapers, you will have found that we were 'quite happy'! Under such circumstances we could scarcely be otherwise. Having to stand (were you to sit, you would be submerged) the whole night and the following day in this canal, with an enemy doing his best to send you along the Milky Way, your food saturated with muddy water, your whole body aching in every limb, and rheumatism and frost- bite staring you in the face, – why you can't help but be happy and cheerful! The *papers* say we were happy, and – er – *they* ought to know![30]

The above example from the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle* is particularly interesting in that its author attacks the press's reporting of the war and criticises press accounts for inaccurately describing the hardships endured by soldiers on active service. However, it was not only the popular press that created a specific vision of reality for its readership. As the discussion of this chapter has shown, the content of soldier magazines was likewise artificially shaped. Soldier magazines preferred to document general, rather than individual, experience, while the desire for order, as manifested in detailed accounts of activities and sport, and echoed in certain popular creative forms, further prioritised the creation of a vision of a predictable, ordered reality that countered the disorder and disarray occasioned by military experience. The preference for humour, likewise, indicated a

preference for looking at, and documenting, experience in a way that focused on the positive.

The anonymous article 'Mons: A Patient's Reminiscences', also published in the June 1915 issue of the *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, provides us with further evidence of the fact that soldier magazines presented a carefully controlled version of reality. Here, a brief editorial intrusion is telling indeed. This occurs when the editor interrupts the writer's description of the retreat from Mons and states that 'The retiral is then described in all its gruesomeness – dead and dying men, "torn with shrapnel, horse-less ambulance wagons…"'.[31] This short editorial intrusion makes it clear that the editor removed content from the article prior to its publication, while his use of the term 'gruesomeness' indicates that graphic detail had been edited out of the account.

The editor of *The Wipers Times*, Frederick Roberts, likewise shaped the reality that was presented within the pages of his magazine. This is a fact identified by John Ivelaw-Chapman in *The Riddles of Wipers: An Appreciation of the Trench Journal 'The Wipers Times'*, where he describes the tension between the repression and articulation of experience that Roberts faced when documenting experience:

> He didn't report victories, as the British press did in July 1916, because he knew that there hadn't been any, and he felt himself unable to tell of death, failure and disaster because those yet to be thrown into the battle must be allowed the possibility that things weren't as bad as rumour had them. (82)

As the two above quotations confirm, the editorial decisions made by the editors of both soldier and hospital magazines were driven by the consideration of their audience. The issue of morale was key. For editors of soldier magazines, such as Frederick Roberts, men in the line shouldn't be given false hopes, thus resulting in a loss of morale when they were confronted with reality, while men who hadn't yet seen action in battle should be allowed to hope, thus ensuring that their morale was maintained until they gained their own first-hand experience of life at the front. For editors of hospital magazines, the description of the war's realities and its

attendant horrors would only cause distress for readers during a period of convalescence in which they were in a poor condition, either physically or mentally. Therefore, soldier magazines provided, as identified by Graham Seal, an 'ameliorated version' of reality that suited the needs of their audience (*Soldiers' Press* 3). These accounts may have been 'riddled with contradictions, anomalies, absences and elisions' but, in doing so, they served an importance purpose in describing a reality 'presented as soldiers wanted it to be' (6).

It is by examining the content of *The Hydra* in more detail that we can gain a deeper understanding as to why the magazine's content would seek to present a particular version of the realities of life at Craiglockhart. The vision of the hospital as conjured up in the pages of *The Hydra* is one of a bustling hospital community in which patients good-humouredly and busily engaged themselves in a wide range of activities both within the hospital itself and in the wider community of Edinburgh. This image of the hospital was shaped by the magazine's links to the hospital's therapeutic ethos: *The Hydra* was produced by the hospital's patients as part of their ergotherapy. By describing the wide-range of activities in which patients were taking part, *The Hydra* signalled to both the hospital's patients and staff that positive progress was being made on the road to recovery. Accounts of patients participating in the work of various societies, playing sports and taking part in the hospital's concerts served as proof of the fact that patients were achieving success in their battle against neurasthenia and in their attempts to reintegrate themselves with others. The humorous tone of the magazine, in which jokes could be made and complaints vented through laughter, further indicated that a movement away from morbidity was possible. All members of the hospital's community were catered for in the version of reality depicted in *The Hydra*. Those whose condition was improving would find their morale boosted by accounts that confirmed that they were part of a wider community of men who were moving towards recovery, while for those whose condition remained poor, such accounts served an aspirational

function in providing them with tangible evidence of the fact that positive progress, and recovery, were possible.

We need only refer to the account of hospital life given by Siegfried Sassoon in *Sherston's Progress* to appreciate the fact that the realities of life at Craiglockhart were rather different to those described in *The Hydra.* Describing the hospital during daylight hours, Sassoon identifies that 'The doctors did everything possible to counteract gloom, and the wrecked faces were outnumbered by those who were emerging from their nervous disorders'. He concludes that, as a result, the staff were successful in ensuring that the hospital 'made cheerful conversation' (53). However, Sassoon's account of nights at the hospital is quite different. Here, he describes that the staff 'lost control and the hospital became sepulchral and oppressive with saturations of war experience' as men walked the corridors and smoked cigarettes late into the night to avoid sleeping (53-54). Sassoon continues, stating that, despite the best efforts of the staff, patients were tormented by nightmares in which 'each man was back in his doomed sector of a horror-stricken Front Line, where the panic and stampede of some ghastly experience was re-enacted among the livid faces of the dead. No doctor could save him then' (53-54).

Sassoon's account makes it clear that Craiglockhart's patients were men deeply troubled by their war memories. During the day, their symptoms might be managed; by night, however, matters were quite different. Given the fragile mental state of readers of the magazine, we can appreciate the fact that *The Hydra* had to operate in a carefully mediated space in order to ensure that patients in poor condition were not distressed by the magazine's content, that those on the road to recovery felt encouraged by their progress and that those whose recovery was almost complete felt positive about the possibility of returning to military duty.

However, an emphasis on the positive was not without risk, as can be seen with reference to the poem 'Why Worry!' by 'Synjin', which was

published in the 4 August 1917 issue of *The Hydra.* On first reading, 'Why Worry!' appears innocuous enough. The poem is as follows:

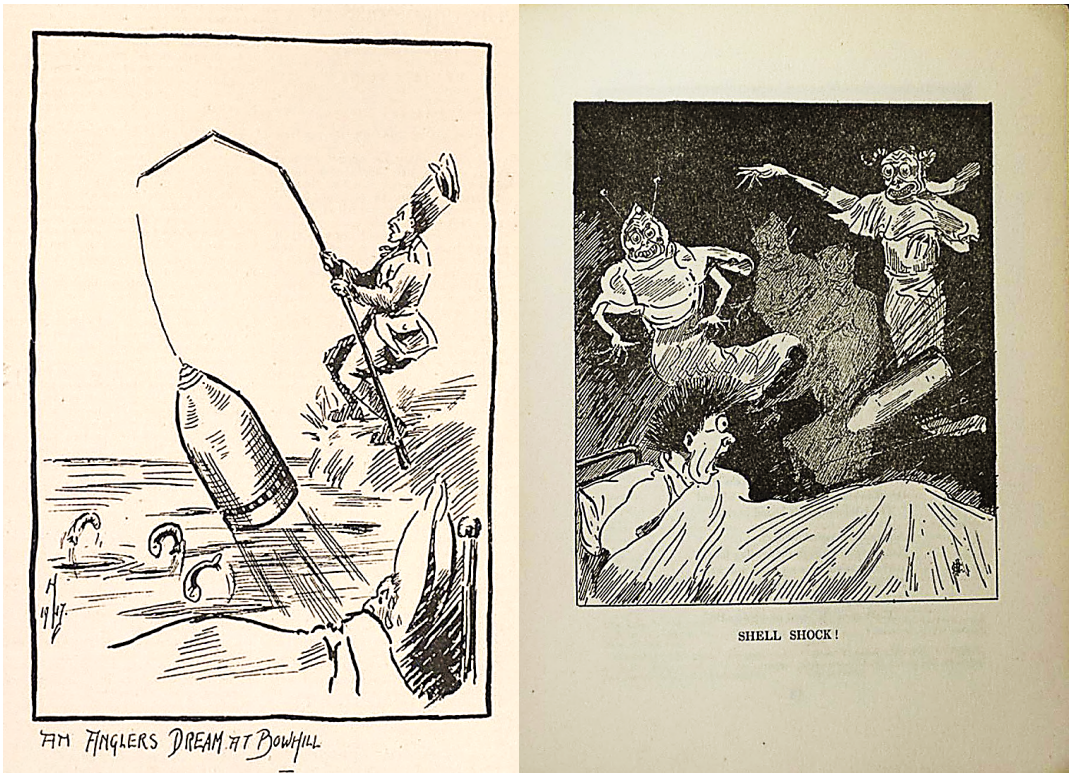
> Make for yourself a good strong box,
> Fashion each part with great care,
> And when you are troubled, dear reader,
> Just "bung" all your troubles in there;
> Hide there all thought of your failures,
> And each bitter cup that you quaff,
> Lock all your heartaches within it,
> Then sit on the box, and laugh.[32]

At first, the poem's advice that one should focus on the positive, rather than dwelling on one's woes, appears eminently sensible. However, the central image of the box is deeply troubling when we consider the fact that the poem was written by a Craiglockhart patient and read by his fellow inmates. The speaker's advice that 'troubles' (4) be put into a 'good strong box' (1) runs counter to the very ethos of Craiglockhart: here, the speaker's problems and challenges are put aside and not engaged with, as is made clear by the carelessness suggested by his use of the word 'bung' (4). Furthermore, in telling readers to 'Make for yourself a good strong box / [and] Fashion each part with great care' (1-2), 'Synjin' arguably advocates the repression of experience rather than its articulation. Note that he advises that problems be dealt with by putting them in a 'good strong box' (1) that has been 'Fashion[ed] . . . with great care' (2), which can be read as an allusion to the willed repression of troubling experiences. However, by putting his problems out of sight and out of mind, the poem's speaker does not deal with his troubles at all: once boxed up, he will have no more to do with them. The possibility of his troubling memories being engaged with through articulation is denied and the troubling aspects of experience are repressed in order that he might go through life with a smile on his face.

The poem's central image of repression would certainly have troubled Craiglockhart's doctors, as the countering of repression lay at the very core of their therapies. Patients simply could not recover if they did not confront their experiences and bring them back into the narrative of their lives through the act of articulation. Soldiers who repressed the traumatic

memories and negative emotions associated with their diagnosis would only find temporary respite in putting their troubling experiences out of mind. This was made clear by Rivers in 'An Address on the Repression of War Experience', where he identified that any patient who attempted to keep troubling memories from his mind during the day would likely be tormented by his memories at night, which would find expression within his consciousness 'with redoubled force and horror when he slept' (174). Thus, any patient who repressed his traumatic memories was likely to succeed only in prolonging his own misery.

It is interesting that two of the most striking images printed in *The Hydra* are those that illustrate the dangers associated with following the advice given in 'Why Worry!'.



Figures 5 & 6 'An Anglers Dream at Bowhill' (*The Hydra*, June 1917) and 'Shell Shock!' (*The Hydra,* December 1917).

These items are from the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, University of Oxford (www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit); © English Faculty Library, University of Oxford.

In both ‘An Angler’s Dream at Bowhill’ and ‘Shell Shock!’, the tendency of repressed traumatic war memories to surface at night is emphasised. In ‘An Angler’s Dream at Bowhill’, the dreamer awakens, bathed in sweat and huddled in his bed sheets, after dreaming of landing a shell while out fishing, while in ‘Shell Shock!’ the dreamer is shocked awake by a dream of an approaching shell and haunted by visions of ghoulish figures whose appearance bears more than a passing resemblance to gas mask wearing soldiers. These images make clear the risk of following the advice given in ‘Why Worry!’, as it was by repressing memories of their traumatic experiences that the fate of the men in the images would become the patients’ own. In this respect, these images can be ‘read’ as embodying an act of articulation as a negative and distressing aspect of neurasthenia, the nightmares suffered by the hospital’s patients, is here acknowledged rather than being hidden away. Their inclusion within *The Hydra* thus makes clear the fact that the magazine’s preference for the positive did not come at the cost of negative emotions and experiences being repressed. The vividness of these images instead suggests the tension between the repression and articulation of experience, rather than outright repression. The artists in question were perhaps unable to articulate the horror of their dreams in words and instead turned to the different expressive medium of art to engage with their distressing experiences.

The written content of *The Hydra* further suggests the tension between the repression and articulation of experience in its inclusion of references to neurasthenia within the magazine’s pages. References to the condition, when included, are predominantly veiled and brief in nature. The multiple references to the apathy of patients included in editorials by editors eager to source contributions, for example, allude to the poor state of the hospital’s patients. ‘We have experienced enormous difficulty in persuading people to write’, states one editorial, while another complains that ‘No one contributes. We insist that his apathy at once be thrown off’ (1).[33&34] References to neurasthenia can also be uncovered in the magazine’s

documentary content, where the poor condition of patients is likewise referred to in euphemistic terms in both concert reviews and the 'Notes and News' section. In one concert review, we learn that a patient named Mr Pocket 'did very well, but it was evidently a case of "wind up," as I could see his bonny knees shaking!' while learning that another performer named Birch 'has been very seedy just of late' (16).[35] In the concert review published on the 26 May 1917, humour veils a serious concern as the reviewer notes that a former patient has returned to the city, possibly after suffering a relapse. 'But what is Seager doing in Edinburgh after his discharge from Hospital?', he asks, 'We think dark thoughts!' (15).[36] An entry in the review of the hospital's gardening activities in the 21 July 1917 issue plays its humour quite literally too close to the bone. 'Major Bryce has been performing prodigies with a scythe,' the editor describes, 'but the thought of neurasthenic enthusiasts endeavouring to emulate him makes us shudder' (7).[37]

In the magazine's creative content, too, neurasthenia is also fleetingly alluded to. In 'The Counter-Attack–A Story Full of Morals', 'Windup' describes 'vainly trying to dodge motor buses which invariably seemed to back fire at the sight of . . . [his] blue band', states that '8.30 ack emma – [is] the time when sleep really does come to one' and describes being able to say the word 'clicked . . . without stuttering at the "c"'.[38] In the short story, 'A Vision', C. Wakelin Scott also describes the distress that could be caused by loud noises, as his protagonist describes a bus backfiring 'as buses always do when anywhere near me–causing me to start in the way that sets a hall-mark in the denizens of Craiglockhart'.[39] These references to the condition make clear the fact that *The Hydra* did not actively repress descriptions of neurasthenia from its pages and that its focus on the positive did not come at the cost of preventing patients from articulating their experiences as mental casualties of the war. The magazine's inclusion of neurasthenia within its pages, however brief and fleeting, serves as evidence of the hospital's therapies in action and indicates a willingness, on the part

of some patients, however tentative, to describe their symptoms and experiences. Here, the references made to neurasthenia within the pages of the magazine are important acts of articulation in indicating that positive progress was being made, thus offering readers hope that they, too, might move beyond being cowed by their traumatic memories. The inclusion of descriptions of men being visibly unwell, with shaking knees and stuttering voices, was also likewise consolatory in reassuring patients that they were not alone and were, instead, bonded to their fellow patients by the particulars of their condition.

On examining *The Hydra* in comparison with other soldier magazines, we can better appreciate the place that *The Hydra* occupied within the wider outpouring of articulation that took place during the First World War. The magazine shared with the wider genre the desire to document novel wartime experience and to order these experiences through articulation, thus fostering powerful bonds between soldiers and offering consolation that hardships were shared by the many. *The Hydra* used the hallmarks of the wider genre of soldier magazines, combined with their emphasis on creating a particular vision of reality, and created, within its pages, a specific image of life at Craiglockhart. The magazine's documentary content portrayed Craiglockhart as being a place of recovery, in which men actively engaged in the hospital's cure by taking part in activities and interacting with one another socially. For patients in the early stages of their recovery, this content indicated that recovery was possible; for those more advanced in their treatment, the magazine became the printed embodiment of their progress. In both cases, the magazine's emphasis on shared experience offered its readers consolation that they were not alone.

The relative lack of detailed accounts of neurasthenia within the pages of *The Hydra* makes clear the fact that Craiglockhart was both a community in which recovery was in progress and that many of the hospital's patients remained distressed by their condition. Engagement with neurasthenia, however fleeting, served as an indication of the fact that the articulation of

experience was possible; offering readers hope that they, too, could make positive progress while patients at the hospital. As the case study of the next chapter will show, *The Hydra* offered patients a platform for the expression of their troubling experiences through its inclusion of creative content. The forthcoming study of a selection of poetry published in *The Hydra* will make clear the fact that creative endeavour was a means by which some patients engaged with the hospital's therapeutic method and, in doing so, negotiated the road to recovery through creative expression.

4. Negotiating the Road to Recovery: Poetry and *The Hydra*

In this chapter, a selection of poems published in *The Hydra* will be examined at length and discussed with reference to the repression and articulation of war experience. To this end, the poems selected for inclusion in this chapter are those in which wartime settings can be discerned through closer examination or those in which a wartime setting is explicitly established. Wartime experience had occasioned the breakdowns suffered by the writers of these poems; thus, both their inability and ability to engage with their subject can be read in relation to Craiglockhart's ethos of encouraging patients to engage with, and articulate, their distressing experiences. As discussion of these poems will show, poetry was a means by which difficult emotional experiences could be engaged with and the movement from the repression to the articulation of experience negotiated by the hospital's literary-minded patients.

The opening chapter of this thesis, 'Craiglockhart War Hospital: A Progressive Institution', established the fact that the act of engaging with experience and articulating troubling emotions lay at the core of the treatments offered at Craiglockhart. The hospital's staff, in adhering to the psychological interpretation of mental collapse in war, encouraged their patients to engage with their traumatic memories and viewed this as being vital to their recovery. For Rivers, the repression of experience was manifested in his patients' 'attempt to banish from their minds altogether' the cause of their current malady ('War Experience' 173). His treatment method explicitly encouraged the articulation of experience, as achieved through autognosis (*Psychiatry and the War* 368). Brock's treatment method, as outlined in 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace' also emphasised the value of identifying the cause(s) of his patients' neurasthenia through psychoanalysis and engaging in 'therapeutic conversations' aimed at reducing his patients' distress (30). Brown's

methods, likewise, emphasised the importance of engaging with traumatic experience through articulation and securing its cathartic release through articulation, as facilitated by his use of autognosis (*Psychology and Psychotherapy* 103).

The acts of articulation that took place within the treatment rooms at Craiglockhart War Hospital could be continued within the hospital's magazine, *The Hydra*. As the previous chapter has shown, the magazine was part of the wider outpouring of expression that dominated the First World War and it performed an important function in enabling the hospital's patients to document their experiences. As a result of its connections to ergotherapy, the magazine also functioned as a creative space in which literary-minded patients could re-connect with their creative interests, either in the form of helping to produce the physical magazine or by contributing to its content. This was particularly encouraged by Brock, who argued that a patient's ergotherapy should embody a meaningful re-connection with the self, 'be based on his previous experience . . . and bear a relation to that which he is most likely to take up in future life' (33).

The Hydra's culture of anonymity, a hallmark of the wider genre of soldier magazines whose emphasis was on documenting shared experience, means that it has not been possible to identify the authors of the poems in this chapter. The readings that follow will proceed on the assumption that the authors of these poems were creatively-minded men who were encouraged through ergotherapy to produce creative works while being treated at the hospital. Their poems can thus be read as documents of their treatment in progress, in which they navigate a path towards recovery by expressing themselves in verse.

There are number of reasons why poetry proved so popular with the patients of Craiglockhart. The trends in education and attitudes to literature, as discussed in the previous chapter with reference to Paul Fussell's discussion of the issue in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, were certainly an important factor. These increased levels of overall literacy,

combined with the high-esteem in which literature was held, ensured its popularity at the time. This was further enhanced, as identified by Fussell, by the 'appeal of popular education' and the cult of 'self-improvement', which fostered a great engagement with literature among the populace (157). Trends in education further ensured the popularity of poetry. In 'Poetic Form and the First World War', Peter Howarth identifies that Britain's compulsory education system indoctrinated students to believe that 'prosody replicated an ideal, disciplined, civilised order'; a teaching that was further emphasised by the popularity of instructive volumes about how to write poetry (52).

Poetry may also have proved enduringly popular with patients at Craiglockhart as it was a form that was well suited to their current experiences. In *Literature and the Great War*, Randall Stevenson argues that 'poetry sometimes seemed the only means of confronting . . . [the war's] challenges or at any rate better adapted to them than other genres of writing'. He further identifies that, for soldiers at the front, who had few personal belongings and low hopes of their own survival, 'poetry's brevity offered obvious attractions' while also arguing that 'Poetry's brief, concentrated visions were also ideally appropriate to the fragmentary yet powerful experiences the war often offered' (125; 128). It is thus little wonder that *The Wipers Times* famously complained that 'an insidious disease is affecting the Division and the result is a hurricane of poetry' in its 20 March 1916 issue.[1]

At Craiglockhart, the familiarity of poetry as an expressive form no doubt contributed to its appeal to patients. Its stylistic qualities, as identified by Stevenson, would also certainly have been appealing to Craiglockhart's community of men broken by their military experiences. The medium's concise nature enabled patients to express themselves in a way that avoided the mental strain caused by extended periods of concentration, while also limiting the potential for patients to become distressed by engaging with their personal experiences for a protracted period. Santanu Das discusses the curative potential of verse with specific reference to

Craiglockhart in ‘War Poetry and the Realm of the Senses’, in which he identifies that the long-established connection between creativity and rehabilitation was something that motivated Brock to encourage his patients’ participation in the hospital’s literary activities: ‘in an atmosphere where the senses are “charred”, verse may provide a space at once to soothe and rekindle the senses’ (78). Thus, as this chapter will show, a number of Craiglockhart’s patients appear to have used poetry as a medium by which to move beyond their traumatised state through re-engaging with their emotional experiences and articulating these in verse. In the poems discussed early in this chapter, a pronounced tension between the repression and articulation of experience can be detected, while in the later selection an increased willingness to engage with the war is evident, thus suggesting positive progress made on the road to recovery.

The poems ‘Parting’ and ‘A Shattered Hope’ by ‘Synjin’ were published in the 23 June 1917 and 7 July 1917 issues of *The Hydra.*[2&3] Both poems describe a broken-hearted speaker who has recently parted from a lover. When examined in relation to Craiglockhart’s expressive therapies, both poems are of particular interest, as it is only after examining veiled descriptive clues within each text that a wartime setting can be discerned. In the reading that follows, it will be argued that the poems can be read as documents of early therapy. Here, the speaker’s inability to explicitly acknowledge the role that the war has played in his separation suggests the fact that engaging directly with the war remained problematic for ‘Synjin’. The repression of war experience in the poem is countered to a certain extent, however, by the speaker’s willingness to explore the negative emotions that accompany his heartbreak, which suggests the poet’s engagement with the wider emotional pains that he has suffered because of the war.

It is clear from the outset that ‘Parting’ documents a separation undesired by the speaker (Appendix A.1). In the imperative opening, ‘Go’, the speaker orders his beloved to leave him; however, this is immediately

complicated by the parenthetical '–for we go together–' (1), which makes clear the fact that the parting is undesired by both parties. The speaker's deep affection for his beloved is expressed in his statement that 'All I have given you, heart and thought and soul' (3) but despite this, he goes on to state his wish that she move on from their relationship as he tells her that he wishes to be 'no bar / Across your path in life' (4-5). After much deliberation on the speaker's part, the poem concludes with a poignant repetition of the opening line's imperative. Here, again, the parting of the lovers is bittersweet as the beloved is sent away with love: 'Go–for love itself goes with you–dear' (14), the speaker tells her, in a final statement of his enduring affection. In 'A Shattered Hope', too, the speaker separates from a lover for whom he continues to feel great affection (Appendix A.2) Indeed, he goes so far as to call her 'a fellow soul' (3), in a description that indicates the profound bond that exists between them. The speaker justifies their parting by consoling himself that it is done in service of the greater good, describing himself as being 'a greater spirit' (13) and concluding that, despite being 'reluctant' (18) to do so, he will end the relationship 'in hope / that greater happiness will thence arise' (19).

In both 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', the speaker fails to state an explicit reason for separating from his lover. It is only after the reader decodes clues within the poem's content that a wartime setting can be uncovered and the reason for their parting made clear. In 'Parting', the first clue is the speaker's statement that 'There I must be' (2), which can be understood as being a reference to the war if we interpret the obligation of 'must' to be an indication that the speaker has military duties to fulfil. Other clues come in the speaker's references to 'The great world striving' (8) and 'the bitter distance of earth's ways' (11). Here, the fact that the 'world' is 'striving' suggests that the globe is in a state of struggle, thus serving as a coded reference to the war, while the 'bitter distance of earth's ways' can be read as being a coded reference to the global events that have intervened in the lovers' happiness. In 'A Shattered Hope', hidden clues can also be

identified. These come in the form of the speaker's reference to 'this restless, wavy world' (5) and 'the crumbling earth' (12). Here, 'restless . . . world' suggests a time of global upheaval, while 'wavy' suggests a life set off course by current events. The speaker's use of the word 'wavy' can also be read as a reference to the sea, this perhaps alluding to the fact that the speaker must soon travel abroad, such as by crossing the English Channel to France. The speaker's reference to the 'the crumbling earth' is a further veiled reference to the war that suggests that the world is in a state of disintegration, here read as a coded reference to the lack of stability that has ensued as a result of the conflict.

Having thus decoded the clues that allow for a wartime reading of the poem to be pursued, both 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope' can be read as documents of a romantic separation necessitated by the war. Now, the speaker's insistence in 'Parting' that he 'be no bar' across his lover's 'path in life' (5) can be understood as springing from his desire to protect her from future pain. Should she be left waiting for his return or, in the worst-case scenario, mourning his death, their relationship would be a 'bar' preventing her from moving forward. In the present, she might defer decisions about her future in the hope that they could continue their lives together after the war while, in the future, mourning her lover's death would put her life into stasis. Likewise, in 'A Shattered Hope', a wartime reading of poem can also be pursued, after the hidden clues within the text are unlocked. The speaker's unusual statement that 'Ne'er dare I set my soul on anything / Which but a touch of Time can shake to pieces' (6-7) now makes sense. Here, the speaker is aware of the fact 'a touch of Time' can indeed be destructive: as a soldier, he knows that it may only take a moment for his life to end. It is this awareness of the very real possibility that he will be killed that renders the speaker incapable of setting his 'soul on anything' because he is aware that he is gambling with his life by going to war and cannot count on surviving. Perhaps this is also the reason for his philosophical and euphemistic language at this point. The speaker, aware of the fact that his

future might bring with it his sudden and premature death, is unable to articulate this fact out of a desire for self-preservation. Rather than explicitly express his fears about the future, the speaker chooses instead to veil his ruminations in elevated language that keeps the possible horrors of future experience at a distance.

'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope' gain considerably in complexity when their veiled references to the war are decoded. Based on the evidence of both, we can read the poems as embodying their author's willingness to begin engaging with his distressing emotional experiences. For the doctors at Craiglockhart, it was not only wartime experiences at the front that were important in the therapy room, as the holistic emphasis of their treatment methods ensured that they attended to the overall health of their patients and examined their wider emotional health as individuals. This is evidenced by Brock emphasising, in 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', that it was crucially important for doctors to remember that their patients were not merely soldiers but 'firstly a human being, and a human being is a person surrounded by a complex environment, preceded by a long past' (39). In the case of the author of 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', it perhaps became evident to his doctor during general discussions as to his emotional state that 'Synjin' was not only under emotional strain as a result of his experiences on active service but also as a result of the end of his relationship. Thus, doctor and patient may have talked about this at some length, with the doctor encouraging his patient to articulate these emotions as a means of engaging his patient with his wider emotions in the early stages of therapy. In 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', therefore, the poet signals that he is ready to begin engaging with his wider emotional distress, as caused by his breakup, but makes clear, through the veiling of his references to the war, that he is not yet ready to engage directly in the articulation of the wartime experiences that contributed to his breakdown.

Another poem that documents the separation of lovers is 'Waiting' (Appendix A.3). The poem was published in the first issue of *The Hydra* on

28 April 1917 and is attributed only to a set of initials: 'J.W.O'C.W.'.[4] In comparison with 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', 'Waiting' describes not a final separation but rather the speaker's state of being unwillingly separated from his beloved. There is little that distinguishes the poem in literary terms; however, it is an intriguing work thanks to the content of its second stanza. After decoding the content of the second stanza, it is possible, once again, to read the poem as being indicative of its author's current distress. Like both 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', 'Waiting', too, can be read as a document of the early stages of therapy. Here, as was the case in the previous two works, the poet demonstrates a willingness to examine his wider emotional distress while the tension between the repression and articulation of experience remains. More interesting still is the fact that, after examining the veiled clues in the second stanza, we can read the poem as describing the author's current state of unhappiness as occasioned by his breakdown.

It is evident from the outset that 'Waiting' is a document of the speaker's sadness at being parted from his beloved. 'Is it but two days since we parted?' (1), he asks, admitting that 'time has seemed long to me' (2) in the interim. The speaker continues, admitting that he is 'broken-hearted' (3) and has 'wept' (6) on seeing his beloved 'Each night in dreams' (5). The repeated refrain of the first and third stanzas, 'Till my love comes again' (8; 24), combined with its variations, 'So my love comes back again' (16) and 'When my love comes back again' (32), makes clear the fact that thoughts of his beloved bring the speaker consolation in his current distress.

It is when we examine the second stanza in greater detail that 'Waiting' becomes fascinating indeed. Were it not for the second stanza, the poem would be little more than a somewhat melodramatic assertion of the power of love to sustain the speaker through a time of emotional distress. Given the fact that this stanza is of such interest, it is reproduced in its entirety below:

Alone in this great drear city,

‘Mid the throngs that never end,
An object of scorn or pity,
And nowhere a friend.
But I care not a jot for the gaping crowds,
I care not for fog or rain,
Or lightening [*sic*] flashes, or thunder clouds,
So my love comes back again. (9-16)

At the start of the stanza, the speaker admits that his current distress stems from the fact that he is in a bleak, unwelcoming city. Despite the references to the city being ‘drear’ (9) and the speaker having to contend with ‘fog’ and ‘rain’ (14), along with ‘lightening [*sic*]’ and ‘thunder clouds’ (15), we cannot yet conclude that Edinburgh is being described, tempting as that might be! To confirm that the speaker’s current reality, as a patient of Craiglockhart, is being described, we must pay closer attention to the speaker’s assertions that he is ‘An object of scorn or pity’ (11) who has ‘nowhere a friend’ (12) and is surrounded by ‘gaping crowds’ (13).

The speaker’s description of himself as being ‘An object of scorn or pity’ is intriguing. Read at surface value, this statement appears nonsensical: how could a man walking around an unfamiliar city be the object of such morbid attention from those around him? It is only when we consider the poem as a document of the poet’s own experiences that we can gain a deeper appreciation of the significance of this description. Here, we must recall that, during their leisure time, Craiglockhart’s patients were granted permission to leave the hospital grounds in order to spend time in the city, provided that they wore a blue band with a white tab on the arm of their uniform in order to indicate their status as a patient of Craiglockhart. Bearing this fact in mind, we can better understand the speaker’s reference to the ‘gaping crowds’ (13) that watch him–might their attention be attracted by his uniform and the presence of the blue band?

Having understood that the speaker’s blue band and white tab make him an object of curiosity, we can now appreciate the significance of his statement that he is ‘An object of scorn or pity’ who has ‘nowhere a friend’ (11-12). From this we can infer that the speaker feels that the public is

responding to him in a hostile manner because of his condition. Furthermore, it may also be the case that it is the speaker's own negativity, deriving from his feelings of shame at having broken down, that causes him to perceive the external world as being hostile. The debilitating nature of feelings of shame are discussed by Rivers in 'An Address on The Repression of War Experience', where he describes a case in which a patient's feelings of humiliation at having broken down proved similarly distressing. In this case, Rivers struggled to treat his patient's neurasthenia until he realised that the man was suffering from an additional emotional strain; namely, that of 'attempting to banish from his mind feelings of shame due to his having broken down' (175). Rivers goes on to explain that, after making the man aware that such feelings were unwarranted, 'Great improvement rapidly followed' as the patient 'faced this shame and thereby came to see how little cause there was for this emotion' (175-76). Given the fact that Rivers provides us with an account of treating a patient who was so mortified by his breakdown that he sought to repress his feelings of shame at having broken down, it is possible that the speaker of 'Waiting', likewise, is miserable as a result of his personal feelings about his condition. As was the case in both 'Parting' and 'A Shattered Hope', therefore, 'Waiting' can be read as a document of early therapy in which the poem author indicates his willingness to engage with his wider emotional distress. Here, the poet can articulate his distress at being separated from his lover but an engagement with his negative feelings about being a patient at Craiglockhart remains difficult. As a result, he retreats, in the remainder of the poem, into thinking of his lover as a means of finding consolation.

The three poems discussed thus far are interesting in therapeutic terms due to their veiling of wartime experience. 'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun' by 'Dear Archie' is another poem in this category that is fascinating as a result of the fact that the veiling of experience is carried out in a self-consciously literary fashion (Appendix A.4).[5] 'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun', published in the June 1918 issue of *The Hydra*,

appears, on first reading, to be little more than a tribute to the poetry of Robert Service. However, the poem's numerous factual inaccuracies render the work more complex, in therapeutic terms, than it initially appears.

'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun' is an homage to Robert Service, a popular poet nicknamed the 'Canadian Kipling'. In addition to being a popular poet, Service himself served in the First World War as an ambulance driver and published the collection *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* in 1916. 'Dear Archie' makes clear his familiarity with Service's work in his title, which is a play on that of Service's popular poem 'The Shooting of Dangerous Dan McGrew'. 'Dear Archie''s familiarity with Service's work is further evidenced by the fact that the sergeant in the poem is called M'Grew and through the poem's setting, the Klondike Gold Rush, an event described by Service in his 1907 collection of verse, *Ballads of a Cheechako*. Structurally, the poem mimics Service's couplet-based rhyme scheme while also mimicking the Alaskan setting of *Ballads of a Cheekchako*. The poem refers to 'Dawson City' (2) and the 'Yukon Battery' (5), and also describes the freezing '40 below' (4) weather conditions endured by those rushing to Klondike in search of their fortunes between 1896 and 1899.

'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun' becomes a more intriguing work when its greater complexities are revealed, as it is following closer examination that we can conclude the poem does not describe the events that it purports to. The first clue that all is not as it seems can be found in the parenthetical apology printed under the poem's title. This reads '(With Apologies to Mr General Service)'. The reader's interest is piqued on reading this apology, given the fact that it is not the poet whose work is being imitated who is apologised to, Mr Robert Service, but rather the British Army's General Service Corps. In the body of the poem proper, other details stand out as being incongruent. Examples of these include the description of the military forces policing the Klondike Gold Rush. The poem lists these as being the 'Alaska R.H.A' and 'Yukon Battery' (5); in reality, the Yukon

Field Force and Canadian North-West Mounted Police were deployed. The description of the 'Alaska R.H.A.' is also unusual, given that the 'R.H.A.', the Royal Horse Artillery, is part of the Royal Regiment of Artillery of the British Army. Having identified these clues that all is not as it seems, the central event described in the poem becomes likewise suspect. Might the event described, in which five men were killed by the premature exploding of a shell in an '"A" Sub Gun', be one that occurred closer to home and in the current conflict?

There are several compelling reasons why it is possible to read 'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun' as a being a veiled account of the poet's own experiences. First, there is the fact that 'Dear Archie' was being treated at Craiglockhart after breaking down on active service. Second, Craiglockhart's therapeutic method sought to enable patients to articulate traumatic memories and, by doing so, neutralise their power to cause distress. Third, the act of revisiting traumatic memories in order that they might be articulated took the form of the patient being guided back, with the help of his doctor, to the moment of trauma. The three points outlined above, combined with the poem's description of a traumatic event, in which the speaker is the only survivor of a terrible accident involving the misfiring of an artillery gun, thus account for the veiling of experience that occurs within the poem. We can therefore read the poem as a document of therapy that reveals its author's reluctance to engage in the direct contemplation of his wartime experiences. His desire to repress reality is further suggested by the removes by which reality is kept at bay in the poem. One of these is geographical, the Alaskan setting, and another is historical, the Klondike Gold Rush. Finally, the poet keeps his experiences at further removes by taking on a different persona; that of a man responsible for policing the Klondike Gold Rush. By describing the catastrophic misfiring of an artillery gun, the poet has taken positive steps towards describing an event that has affected him profoundly. However, his desire to distance himself from articulating the whole truth, as evidenced by his mimicry of Service, can be

understood as being a complex means of preventing himself from engaging deeply with memories still imbued with the power to distress.

'Stared At' is a powerful poem of four short stanzas that was published in the June 1918 issue of *The Hydra* and attributed to 'An Inmate' (Appendix A.5).[6] In the earlier discussion of 'Waiting', it was revealed that the poem's second stanza contained veiled references to the poet's unhappiness at being a mental casualty of the war, which allowed for a 'Craiglockhart' reading of the poem to be pursued. Whereas in 'Waiting', the speaker's descriptions of his present reality were veiled and unspecific, in 'Stared At', the speaker is more forthcoming in describing his emotional distress and in emphatically linking his negative emotions to his experiences at the hospital. This movement towards the articulation of specific experience will be read, in this case, as evidence of the fact that the poem's author was a man who had made greater progress in his treatment.

The speaker of 'Stared At' shares with the speaker of 'Waiting' feelings of distress that result from other people's reactions towards him. This is made clear through his descriptions of being stared at when doing everyday things, such as when taking a 'walk in Princes Street' (1), responding with a 'smile' (2) on meeting friends or laughing when he is told a 'joke' (3). The speaker's actions are quite normal; however, the responses of others towards him are abnormal. In all cases, the response is identical: 'I'm stared at' (4). It is not until the second stanza that the speaker links these unusual reactions to an item worn on his person. The stanza is as follows:

> I've got a blue band on my arm,
> But surely that's not any harm;
> A small white tab may be the charm –
> I'm stared at. (5-8)

The speaker is certain that the blue band, indicating his status as one of the war's wounded, is not the cause of his trouble. Rather, his problem 'may' be caused by the white tab that accompanies the blue band, this being a signal that he was a patient at Craiglockhart.

The awful irony of ‘Stared At’ stems from the fact that the speaker is stared at not for behaving oddly but rather because he is behaving normally. As is revealed in the first stanza, the speaker is stared at when walking, smiling and laughing. He is also stared at, in the third stanza, for behaving moderately, the example being when he drinks water, ‘Adam’s wine’ (10), while out for dinner and doesn’t get ‘tight’ (10). These descriptions make clear the speaker’s belief that his interpersonal interactions have been tainted as a result of his neurasthenia: on seeing him out in public, capable of interacting with others and coping on his own, both his friends and strangers are uncomprehending. This is the cause of much distress for the speaker, who says ‘No wonder that my nerves ain’t right’ (11) because he is always being ‘stared at’ (12) by those around him who do not understand his condition.

While the speaker of ‘Stared At’ suffers considerable distress as a result of other people’s reactions to him, the poem’s content nevertheless suggests a progression in his treatment. The content of the poem also makes clear the fact that the speaker is taking steps towards reengaging with his environment as part of his cure, as was advocated in Brock’s ergotherapy. The speaker is not remaining withdrawn from his wider environment and spending his time solely at Craiglockhart; instead, he is spending time walking in the city centre, going for dinner and interacting with those around him. The speaker’s acute distress at the way that he is treated by those around him perhaps stems from the fact that he has found reintegration difficult and that it has required considerable effort on his part. He is so demoralised by the public’s reaction as it painful for him to realise that members of the public continue to view him as being mentally unwell.

The speaker’s pessimistic feelings are made explicitly clear in the fourth stanza of the poem, where the speaker admits that:

> Craiglockhart mem’ries will be sad,
> Your name will never make us glad;
> The self-respect we ever had
> We’ve lost—all people think us mad. (13-16)

Here, the speaker's feelings of hopelessness are emphasised by the repetition of 'will', which indicates his fixed mind-set and conviction that his future memories of Craiglockhart will never be anything other than tinged with the misery that haunts him in the present. The speaker is so certain that his memories of the hospital 'will' be sad as a result of the public attitudes that he has encountered that he feels that he cannot re-build his feelings of 'self-respect' in light of these constant challenges to his self-esteem.

The final stanza of 'Stared At' is a sobering read. The reader is shocked to learn of the speaker's pessimism about the future, as he expresses his belief that the stigma associated with his condition will be one that will last beyond his lifetime. This is made clear in his description of his tombstone being stared at:

> If "Someone" knew who wrote this verse
> My simple life would be much worse,
> And on my tomb would be this curse,
> "To be stared at." (20-24)

The speaker's reference to 'Someone' is intriguing due to its lack of specificity, while also making clear the speaker's fears about other people learning of his condition. Were people to know his identity, the speaker feels that he would endure a lifetime of being treated differently as a result of his neurasthenia and take his current sadness to his grave. For the doctors at Craiglockhart, it would be troubling indeed to see a patient expressing such sentiments, given the additional strain that these emotions placed on their patients' psyches. The fact that the author of the poem felt this way about his condition makes it clear that he had not yet come to accept the reality of the circumstances that had occasioned his breakdown. In feeling that others are judging him harshly, he is in an identical situation to the writer of 'Waiting' who, it was argued, was yet to confront the feelings of shame that accompanied his condition. It was only by confronting these feelings directly, as the earlier quote from Rivers made clear, that a patient could find relief and 'see how little cause there was for this emotion' ('Address' 175-76). The speaker of 'Stared At' is therefore caught in the tension between

the repression and articulation of experience that was common for Craiglockhart's patients. By composing the poem, and articulating certain troubling emotions, 'An Inmate' took a vital step towards confronting and acknowledging the negative emotions that he felt about his diagnosis. His feelings of being stigmatised, however, suggest that he was yet to engage in the process of re-education, through which he would be encouraged to acknowledge the fact that he need not feel ashamed about breaking down. He is, in this sense, very much like the neurasthenic patient described by Brock in 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', who must yet engage in further therapeutic conversations in order that the 'hopelessness of . . . [his] outlook being removed . . . he may begin at once to live again' (31).

'Present and Future' was published in the final issue of *The Hydra* in July 1918 (Appendix A.6).[7] It is attributed only to a set of initials: 'S.R.G.S.'. 'Present and Future' is another poem that suggests its author's positive progress on the road to recovery. In the poem, 'S.R.G.S.' describes a wartime setting and combines this with the contemplation of the suffering of civilians in war.

The poet's willingness to contemplate the war is immediately evident in the first five stanzas of the 'Present and Future', which describe a wartime setting. Here, the sun sinks among 'smoke-clouds / Lurid and darkly red' (1-2) and illuminates a landscape that has been shattered by war. The landscape is described as 'a world both shattered and dead' (4) that is full of 'smoke-blackened ruins' (5). The 'silence like that of the tomb' (8), which lingers over the landscape, is broken in the fifth stanza by the 'crack of machine gun and rifle, / The crash of the cannon's roar' (17-18), thus making explicit the fact that the warzone is being described.

The world of the poem is also a human landscape, in which civilians are 'described as bodies shrouded in gloom' (6). The poet's engagement with the humans living within this environment shows a great sensitivity to their suffering. His description of the them as being 'shrouded' makes clear the

speaker's awareness that they, too, will suffer and die in the conflict. The sounds of suffering that enter the poem's third and fourth stanza further emphasise the universal nature of suffering in war. The 'cries of the fallen in anguish / As dying, they lie on the ground' (11) are joined by those of 'a grief-stricken woman' (13) and the 'sweet, loving voice of a mother / Trying to comfort her child' (15-16). The scope of the poem, in which the impact of the war on the wider landscape is considered, is particularly resonant of Brock's concept of synoptic vision. Patients were introduced to Brock's concept of synoptic vision before beginning ergotherapy as Brock urged that it was crucially important that 'Before . . . we can act on our environment, we must see it, we must "sense" and understand it' ('Re-Education' 32). The content of 'Present and Future' suggests its author's willingness to engage in contemplation of his wider environment, this being manifested in the tacit realisation that it is not only soldiers who suffer in war. Not only are they made 'homeless' (14), civilians, too, are rendered 'grief-stricken' (13) and 'distraught' (14) by their wartime experiences.

While the content of 'Present and Future' as discussed thus far has been examined as evidence of a positive movement towards a greater engagement with traumatic experience, the tension between repression and articulation lingers. The fact that the poem's descriptions of war are generalised and impersonal can be read as indicating the poet's reluctance to engage too deeply with thoughts of the conflict. It is further interesting that the wartime focus of the first half of the poem is followed by a vision of a peaceful future in the poem's concluding five stanzas. Here, pastoral imagery abounds in the descriptions of 'moorland' (21), 'heather-clad hills' (23) and 'the bleating of wandering sheep' (26). Furthermore, the poem concludes with a message borne on the breeze that speaks of 'The World – at Peace' (40). The weighting of the poem is fascinating in suggesting the poet's desire for consolation: 'Present and Future' is divided into two equal parts of five stanzas each and, in doing so, the poet counterbalances his description of the wartime world at war with a vision of peacetime order,

thus suggesting his profound need for hope. He is unable, therefore, to engage with the war as subject without consoling himself with a vision of an imagined better future.

The anonymous poem 'The Road to Armentieres' can likewise be read as a document of therapy in progress in which the need for consolation is expressed (Appendix A.7).[8] As was the case in the previous poem, 'The Road to Armentieres' is of interest as the tension between the repression and articulation of experience is in evidence once again. In this example, the poem's depiction of a wartime setting and engagement with a distressing personal experience is counterbalanced by the poet's euphemistic treatment of his subject.

'The Road to Armentieres' is a two-stanza poem, written in the first person, that describes wartime experience. In the first stanza, the speaker describes marching towards battle in the company of his friend, and in the second, describes himself marching alone following his friend's death. The hardships of soldiering are described in the poem, with the description of 'The lonely road, the weary road, the road o'mud and stone' (2) making clear the fact that the pair are walking through a desolate landscape and are exhausted by the effort. The speaker's affection for his comrade is also expressed in the first stanza and is emphasised through descriptions of the important role that their friendship played in helping both men to cope with the hardships of active service. The repetition of 'My pal and I' in line 1 ('My pal and I went marching') and line 3 ('My pal and I went singing') suggests that the friendship enabled both men to keep their spirits high. The positive tone of the opening lines, with their emphasis on the bonds of friendship, is shattered in the stanza's final line. 'And now I'm marching down the road alone' (4), the speaker reveals. The placement of 'alone' at the end of the line is cleverly done and effectively highlights the speaker's feelings of isolation and loss. Considered in therapeutic terms, it is interesting that the stanza ends with the speaker revealing that his friend has died. In stating that he is now marching 'down the road alone', the speaker alludes to a

traumatic event having taken place; however, the temporal leap that takes place in the line, combined with the stanza break that follows, prevents him from going into further detail. The pause created by the stanza break is telling indeed: it is a self-imposed narrative silence that makes clear the speaker's reluctance to linger in contemplation of the traumatic event that caused the two to become separated.

In addition to the death of the speaker's friend being kept at temporal removes, the use of euphemistic language in the second stanza makes clear the speaker's reluctance to acknowledge his friend's death. 'I left my pal asleepin' by the road to Armentieres' (5), the speaker explains, in the first line of the second stanza, leaving it to the reader to deduce that his friend has been killed. His euphemistic language later in the stanza further emphasises his emotional distress: the speaker describes his friend as sleeping the 'happy sleep, the endless sleep, the sleep o' quiet ease' (6). Although the speaker cannot explicitly describe the fact that his friend has died, the poem's description of the deep bond that existed between both men suggests the poet's willingness to engage with a distressing personal memory. The fact that the traumatic event central to the poem is alluded to and its effects only euphemistically stated, however, suggests that the poet was still in the process of acknowledging the true emotional impact of the loss of his friend.

The poems discussed thus far in this chapter can be read as documents of Craiglockhart's therapeutic method in action, their content signalling the progress being made by their authors in the treatment rooms at Craiglockhart as they moved away from the repression of troubling experience towards articulation. The poems studied thus far have each embodied the tension between the repression and articulation of experience to varying degrees. In 'Parting' and 'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun', for example, the veiling of wartime experience can be read as indicating a reluctance on the part of their authors to engage directly in contemplation of their experiences in the war. In other poems, such as

'Present and Future' and 'The Road to Armentieres', the poets' use of a wartime setting can be read as embodying their greater engagement with thoughts of the war, while the poems' consolatory aspects, such as the imagining of a peaceful future and euphemistic description of death, is used to counter the potential of the poems to cause distress.

Two poems whose content suggests that their authors had made further progress in their treatment are 'Sonnet' by F.V.B. and 'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private'.[9&10] This chapter will conclude by examining both works, whose content can be read as evidence of the positive progress that their authors had made while being treated at Craiglockhart. Both poems make use of wartime settings, describe wartime experience in graphic detail and suggest an engagement with Brock's concept of synoptic vision in moving out with the bounds of subjective experience to contemplate the wider context of the war.

'Sonnet' by F. V. B. was published in the January 1918 issue of *The Hydra* and is noticeably different to the poems examined thus far in this chapter (Appendix A.8). 'Sonnet' moves from the description of individual experience that has dominated in the other verse of this chapter and instead makes an impassioned protest against the war which incorporates the description of distressing aspects of wartime experience, namely, the fate of the war dead and the war's immorality.

From the outset, 'Sonnet' is a poem of protest in which the wider circumstances of the war are discussed. Here, the emphasis is not on individual suffering but rather the wider circumstances that make this suffering possible. This focus is suggestive of Brock's concept of synoptic vision, in which the individual, as part of his ergotherapy, was encouraged to consider his relation to his wider environment. The poem's protest, in which popular notions regarding the glory of war are attacked, suggests the poet's awareness of the role that external factors play in shaping the suffering of soldiers. In the opening lines, blind patriotism is attacked in the description of 'the splendour of a simple thought' (1) that motivates some men to enlist.

The lack of ‘splendour’ involved is made clear by the comparison of the third line, in which the speaker likens the short length of soldiers’ lives to the time that lapses between night and morning, thus emphasising how quickly their lives will be lost.

The poem’s protest is made further clear in the description of dead soldiers as being a ‘Jesu crucified’ (6), who have died a sacrificial death and, in doing so, ‘Hath surely won the thing he dearly bought, / For wrong is right when wrong is greatly wrought’ (7-8). Here, the moral code of the war comes under attack and the logic that requires men to give their lives is shown to be twisted indeed. Here, the immorality of killing (‘wrong’) is the correct course of action (‘right’) by which soldiers have ‘dearly bought’ the glory that they sought in signing up. The war dead, each a ‘Jesu crucified’, are thus victims of a twisted conception of correct moral action and have given their lives for a lie. In the sestet, the criticism of religious arguments made in favour of the war is concluded in the description of Jesus being ‘[t]he great unchallenged God of No Man’s Land’ (14). This concludes the poem’s attack on the fact that the religious arguments used to justify the war go unchallenged while men continue to suffer and die in the conflict.

Graphic detail intrudes into the poem in the octet in the form of a horrific description of the war dead. In lines 4 and 5, the speaker depicts the landscape of the front line and describes ‘Each human piece of human earth that lies / Stark to the carrion winds and groaning cries / For burial’. This description is visceral, shocking and utterly dehumanises the dead. In describing soldiers’ bodies as a ‘piece of human earth’, the poet conjures a vivid image of dismembered and shell-torn bodies, while the oxymoron of ‘human earth’ is distressing in conjuring a vision of bloody fragments of shattered bodies that are virtually indistinguishable from the blood-soaked ground on which they lie. Not only do men die terrible deaths in war, but, due to the difficulty of retrieving bodies, the dead are left to rot, with the ‘carrion winds’ acting as if birds of prey in scouring the bones clean. The transferred epithet of ‘groaning cries’ is wonderfully effective in describing

the distress that such sights elicit in those who must witness them: on seeing dismembered and decomposing bodies left to rot in No Man's Land, the still-living soldiers let out 'groaning cries' of anguish in response. These lines are significant when read in relation to Craiglockhart's therapies: here, a horrific aspect of wartime experience is described in graphic terms in an act of articulation that suggests the poet's increased mastery over his traumatic memories.

'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private' likewise takes the war as its subject and protests about wartime experience (Appendix A.9). Here, too, the poem's content suggests the poet's engagement with Brock's concept of synoptic vision, as the poem describes not only the hardships endured by soldiers but the suffering of the civilian population, in this case, that of the widows created by the war. The poem's content thus suggests that not only had its author made progress in the treatment room in terms of confronting his own traumatic memories, as evidenced by the poem's trench setting, he had also come to appreciate the fact that soldiers were not the only ones to suffer during the conflict.

'Ballads of France No 2: Any Private to Any Private' describes a trench scene with great immediacy, with the poet's use of the first person and Scottish vernacular drawing the reader into the heart of the action. The poem makes vividly clear the strains with which soldiers on active service must contend. In the first stanza, the speaker articulates his distress not only on seeing the body of a friend being brought down the line but on seeing the condition of the body. 'Hell! what a mess!' the speaker exclaims, 'Damn the swine! / They micht kill clean' (4-5). The depth of the speaker's grief is emphasised in the following stanza, in which the speaker describes that they had known one another since childhood and had 'joined [up] the gither for a bob a day' (13).

Crucially, the speaker's grief is not focused merely on himself; he must also endure the strain of knowing that Wulllie's widow will also suffer. Here, the speaker's empathy for the plight of non-combatants is clearly

evidenced. In the third stanza, the speaker expresses his disgust at the State's treatment of war widows in his reference to the 'bob or twa' (19) that Wullie's widow will receive in compensation for her husband's death, and this only after the authorities 'interfere' and 'pester' her (20; 21). The intrusive connotations of these words make clear the speaker's awareness that the state will use all administrative means possible to ensure that her reliance on them is reduced to its smallest amount, despite her husband having died in the service of his country. By repeating the words from the Daily Paper, 'A burden to the state' (23), as included in the poem's epigraph, the speaker voices his indignation that she should be viewed as being a burden after losing so much, while his statement that 'Her Wullie's shot' (23) makes clear his deep compassion for a woman who has lost the man that she loved. The speaker's rich appreciation of the negative impact of the war on the wider spheres of human experience is suggestive indeed of the poet's positive engagement with Brock's synoptic vision as the poem moves out with the sphere of masculine, soldierly suffering to consider the war's negative impact on the civilian population, in this case the women left widowed.

The repeated refrain of the poem, 'I canna lauch the nicht', is rendered poignant indeed on its final return in the poem's *envoi*. Here, the description of the cumulative strains endured by the poem's soldier speaker makes clear the fact that he has no reason to be cheerful, given what he has had to endure. Not only grief-stricken by the death of a friend and granted no time to mourn, he is distressed at thoughts of Wullie's widow and is keenly aware of the suffering that she will endure on learning of her husband's death. The poem's content thus suggests that its author has taken many positive steps taken towards recovery: a wartime setting is described in detail, as are the varying sources of the speaker's emotional distress. The poem is further interesting in terms of Craiglockhart's therapies in that it does not describe individual experience; rather, the poem's description of wartime experience is generalised thanks to the poem's title. Thus, the hardships described are

not those endured by one soldier only: the content of the poem could be the experience of 'any' men in the trenches. The poem therefore indicates the poet's poignant awareness of the shared suffering that is experienced by men at war. Furthermore, the poem's description of hardship is not limited to the sphere of masculine suffering. The speaker's articulation of his sympathy for Wullie's widow, combined with his anger at her treatment by the State, acknowledges the fact that those far removed from the line also suffer in the conflict. The scope of the poem, in which the suffering of one man is made emblematic of the suffering of all, and in which the suffering of women is also incorporated, is evidence of lessons learned thanks to Brock's concept of synoptic vision. Read as a document of ergotherapy, 'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private' embodies Brock's working cure in action: the poet engages in purposeful work in creating the poem with protest as his aim, while making clear his appreciation of the concept of synoptic vision in the poem's content. The poet's rich empathy for the suffering of soldiers and women in wartime is indicative of the poet's engagement with the wider environment and makes clear his empathetic awareness that he is not the only one to suffer in wartime. The poem is thus a powerful act of articulation of not only individual, but shared, experience of which Craiglockhart's doctors would be proud.

The poems studied in this chapter illustrate the fact that, for the literary-minded patients of Craiglockhart, creative endeavour could be a powerful means of implementing the hospital's therapeutic method. For those who could not yet directly engage with the war, as evidenced by their veiling of the conflict within their poems, their engagement with wider emotional experience was nonetheless significant in indicating their willingness to engage with their emotions and to transcribe these into words. Other poems within this selection indicate the further progress made by their authors on the road to recovery. The use of wartime settings in poems such as 'Present and Future' and 'The Road to Armentieres' make clear the willingness of their authors to directly engage in contemplation of the war, while also

embodying the tension between the repression and articulation of experience that was common in mental casualties of the war. By employing consolatory mechanisms, such as the vision of a peaceful future in the second half of 'Present and Future' and the use of euphemism to shield the speaker of 'The Road to Armentieres' from the horror of his friend's death, the poets in question make clear their on-going emotional vulnerability.

The poems 'Sonnet' by F.V.B. and 'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private' can be read as manifesting the advanced stages of Craiglockhart's cure in action. Here, both poets' relative mastery of their wartime settings suggests that they were no longer held in thrall by their traumatic memories, with F.V.B.'s description of the mangled war dead being particularly striking in this respect. The poems further suggest a greater progress in their authors' rehabilitation thanks to their engagement with Brock's concept of synoptic vision, as a result of which both poems move outwith the sphere of individual experience to consider the wider environment of the war. 'Sonnet' protests against the use of religion to justify the conflict, which only perpetuates the suffering of soldiers and the war's immorality, while 'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private' describes the many strains with which soldiers must contend, both in terms of their own experiences in the lines and their awareness of the suffering endured by non-combatants. The description of the strains endured by its speaker in 'Ballads of France No. 2: Any Private to Any Private', which are then made emblematic of the wider experience of soldiers thanks to the poem's title, is striking indeed in indicating its author's awareness of the shared suffering occasioned by the war.

The poems examined in this chapter are significant documents of Craiglockhart's therapies in action, which make clear the fact that some of Craiglockhart's patients were creatively inspired during their time at the hospital and used verse as a means of further engaging with their treatment. The inclusion of these poems within *The Hydra* serves as further evidence of one of the conclusions of the previous chapter; namely, that the magazine

was an inclusive space in which the engagement with neurasthenia and negative experiences was not excluded. Furthermore, the inclusion of these works within the magazine can be read as further evidence of the fact that *The Hydra*'s content played a positive role in fostering morale among patients. Contributing their poems to *The Hydra* may have proved cathartic for the men who wrote these poems, who may have found relief in articulating their feelings to a sympathetic audience while, for readers, these poems may have been a beacon of hope. Not only would patients recognise that their feelings and difficulties were shared by others in the hospital community; they may have found great comfort in realising that other patients had made progress in their recovery, thus imbuing them with hope that they, too, might do likewise.

In turning to poetry to articulate the negative emotions associated with their condition and to engage with their memories of the war, the poets discussed in this chapter engaged in an activity that had the potential to further enhance their possibility of recovery. Contemporary studies into the clinical significance of expressive writing have confirmed its value as a therapeutic tool. In the article 'Health-related Effects of Creative and Expressive Writing', Geoff Lowe identifies that, even in the present, research is lacking in this fascinating area of study. However, he concludes that therapeutic writing 'may promote health and emotional well-being – possibly by stress buffering and cognitive restructuring processes' (67). Michael Richardson further confirms the therapeutic value of engaging with experience through creativity in the article 'Writing Trauma: Affected in the Act', in which he identifies that the holistic engagement with experience encouraged by the writing process can aid in the reduction of trauma. 'Writers respond *bodily* to the words they write – through breath, tensing of the muscles, shifts in facial expression,' he explains, 'Writing experience entails not only the *expression* of affect, but its *feeling*' (157). Thus, engaging with traumatic memories through writing is a process by which troubling experiences can be confronted through emotional recall and their power to

distress be reduced. Furthermore, writing in the Introduction to *Haunted Narratives: Life Writing in an Age of Trauma*, Rippl et al. identify that therapeutic writing may, like the verbal articulation of traumatic experience, play a crucial role in 'facilitat[ing] the transformation of speechless threats into embedded and narrative memory', thus aiding the recovery of trauma patients (10). The men who wrote the poems discussed in this chapter may therefore have reaped richer benefits through their poetic endeavours: not only did they re-engage with their creativity through ergotherapy, they also engaged in an activity imbued with the potential to further enhance the possibility of recovery.

Thus far in this thesis, readers have been introduced to Craiglockhart War Hospital and the literary culture that existed there. In the first chapter, the therapeutic ethos of the hospital was examined in detail and its emphasis on the importance of articulating troubling experiences was discussed at length. In the second chapter, readers were introduced to the hospital's magazine, *The Hydra*, which was studied both in relation to the wider genre of soldier magazines and as a unique document of life at Craiglockhart. In the current chapter, a number of poems from *The Hydra* were examined as documents of the hospital's therapeutic method in action. In the remainder of this thesis, attention will focus on three men who were patients at Craiglockhart during the First World War. The significance of the hospital in the lives of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon will first be discussed, before the thesis will conclude by introducing readers to George Henry Bonner, whose creative work will be studied here for the first time.

5. Inspiration and Therapy: Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart

Wilfred Owen is considered one of the finest of the war poets and is counted among the most-celebrated poets of the twentieth century. This status is remarkable given the early age at which he died: Owen was killed on 4 November 1918, aged only 25, while leading his men across the Sambre-Oise Canal in France. He has become an iconic voice of the First World War and his richly evoked and nuanced poems of war experience have become central to our cultural memory of the conflict. His poetry has become 'emblematic' of the war thanks to Owen's ability to 'tell us what war felt like' and it thus continues to resonate powerfully in these, the centenary years of the First World War (Hamilton 105).

This chapter will examine Owen's time in Edinburgh and discuss the transformative role that his time at Craiglockhart played in Owen's poetic development. D.S.R. Welland argues that Owen's time at Craiglockhart marked the beginning of the 'greatest creative phase' of Owen's life, while Paul Norgate agrees that Craiglockhart was of central significance to Owen's development as a poet, stating that 'Of all the bouts in Owen's career, the one at Craiglockhart Hospital . . . is perhaps the most remarkable: it was surely here, if anywhere, that he became the "Poet"' so lauded today (*Critical Study* 133; 1). This chapter will first acknowledge the pivotal role played by Siegfried Sassoon, who provided Owen with mentorship and an example to follow. The chapter will then proceed by examining Owen's interactions with his doctor, Arthur Brock, at greater length. Here, it will be argued that the significance of Brock has been much understated. As recourse to Brock's therapeutic method will show, Brock played a crucial role in Owen's poetic development by encouraging Owen to confront his traumatic memories and, as a result, enabled him to use war as the subject for his poetry.

When Owen arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital on the morning of 26 June 1917, he had been suffering from neurasthenia for almost two months. On 1 May, he had been sleeping beside a railway siding when a shell landed nearby, throwing him into the air. On reporting to his superior officer, he was 'observed to be shaky and tremulous, […] his conduct and manner were peculiar, and his memory was confused' (The National Archives (TNA):WO138/74). Owen was kept under observation for a month at the 13th Casualty Clearing Station at Gailly, where he was treated by William Brown, Craiglockhart's future commanding officer. In *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd concludes that this long period of observation is evidence of the fact that Owen 'was clearly a very sick man' at the time (309), a fact further confirmed by Owen being evacuated to Britain for further treatment. The proceedings of his Medical Board, conducted at Netley Military Hospital, Southhampton, on 25 June, note that 'There is little abnormality to be observed' and that Owen suffered from a 'highly strung temperament' (The National Archives (TNA):WO138/74). His condition gave sufficient cause for concern: Owen was declared unfit for general service for six months and sent to Craiglockhart.

'There is nothing very attractive about the place,' Owen told his mother in a letter written on the day that he was admitted to Craiglockhart. 'It is a decayed Hydro,' he continued, 'far too full of officers, some of whom I know' (*Wilfred Owen: Collected Letters*; hereafter cited as *CL* 472). Owen's description of the hospital as being 'far too full' suggests Owen's shock at seeing that so many men had broken down on active service, while his statement that he knew some of them suggests his shame at the thought of being recognised by men that he had known in France. Despite his initial negativity, however, Owen settled quickly, and apparently happily, into hospital life in the weeks that followed. In an undated letter to his mother, written sometime in early July, Owen announced: 'I am full of activities now' (*CL* 475). He went on to tell her about his involvement with the hospital's Natural History Club, that he had written 'an Essay on the Outlook Tower, to

be delivered in privacy to Dr. Brock', and that he planned to write a sonnet on '[t]he Hercules–Antaeas [*sic*] Subject'. He also described having enjoyed numerous excursions around Edinburgh (*CL* 475-6). Owen was evidently stimulated by the hospital's ethos of active recovery and was happily finding his feet both among his peers and in the wider city.

Owen's reference to 'The Hercules-Antaeus Subject' indicates that he was quick to busy himself with writing poetry early in his stay at Craiglockhart. Owen's passionate interest in poetry had endured since adolescence and his desire to find a subject for his poetry had motivated him to enlist. At first, Owen's geographical distance from Britain prevented him from feeling under pressure to enlist: when war was declared, he was working as a tutor of English in the south of France. When he finally did decide to enlist, on 30 June 1915, Owen framed his decision in terms of his on-going search for the poetic muse. He wrote to his mother that day and quoted from *Hills and the Sea*, the 1906 collection of essays by Hilaire Belloc. In 'The First Day's March', Belloc described his experiences while completing his military service in France and quoted Albert De Vigny's statement that '[i]f any man despairs of becoming a Poet, let him carry his pack and march in the ranks' (75). Having long vacillated as to whether to enlist, the quotation spurred Owen into action by appealing to his creative sensibilities and aspirations. After returning to Britain, Owen enlisted in the Artists' Rifles on 21 October 1915, the name of his chosen regiment no doubt resonating with his hopes that military experience would provide him with creative inspiration.

Before arriving at Craiglockhart, Owen had completed only three war poems. In '1914', the war was configured as 'the Winter of the world' in which a blood sacrifice was required to ensure the coming of spring, 'A New Heaven' argued that soldiers would find paradise in France and, in 'With an Identity Disc', the speaker contemplated his death in the war and eschewed being commemorated in the annals of history in favour of being mourned by a true friend. In *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd identifies three reasons

why Owen had not written any noteworthy war poems before arriving at Craiglockhart. Owen had not yet discovered a basis for his protest; his surroundings were not conducive to creativity, given the fact that he preferred to work in isolation; and the mental distress felt in response to his experiences arose long before he was diagnosed with neurasthenia, which would have made contemplation of his experiences unbearable (73).

In his early weeks at Craiglockhart, Owen started work on the poems 'Ballad of Lady Yolande', 'The Fates', 'Has Your Soul Sipped?', 'Lines to a Beauty Seen in Limehouse' and 'Song of Songs'. Owen's poetic aspirations endured; however, the war as subject is notably absent. In 'Shell-shock and Poetry: Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart Hospital', Paul Norgate argues that 'in this multiplicity of styles and "voices" there is surely also a pattern of avoidance, with Wilfred Owen constantly turning away as if to hide from himself the unhealed shock of his trench experience' (8). However, he selects 'Has Your Soul Sipped' and 'Song of Songs' as being worthy of note. He argues that both works demonstrate Owen's latent talent through their use of pararhyme while concluding that their confused content serves as 'a significant metaphor for his [Owen's] own inner and outer states at the time' (11). Norgate further identifies that 'Has Your Soul Sipped' 'possibly marks the dawning of a sense that some kind of new attitude to bloodshed and "murder" will have to be formulated' (11). The poem certainly does indicate a significant shift in Owen's stance on violence and can be seen as a precursor of his later work in that he describes the beauty to be found in a moment of extreme violence, a notion explored in later poems such as 'Apologia Pro Poemate Meo'. In 'Has Your Soul Sipped', the vivid sensory detail of used to describe the subject's death is striking, in suggesting Owen's nascent willingness to engage in the articulation of unsettling events. The image of the 'life-tide [that] leaps' (40) from the subject's mouth and the descriptions of 'bitter blood' (43) and 'the death-smell' (44) are intense and unnerving. The speaker's earlier reference to this death as possessing 'a strange sweetness' (6), coupled with the reference to the

'boy's murdered mouth' (38) and the 'smile' on his lips as he dies (46), gives us cause to wonder if the poem marks Owen's first foray into mining his own violent experiences in verse.

The most famous of the two meetings that would exert a transformative influence on Owen was his meeting with Siegfried Sassoon. It was pure coincidence that Owen, an aspiring poet, found himself at Craiglockhart at the same time as Sassoon, an already established poet; regardless, it was an encounter that would change Owen's life. Sassoon not only taught Owen how to use the war as a subject for his poetry, he also acted as Owen's mentor and honed his creative eye. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the fact that, while Sassoon shaped Owen's poetic destiny, he did not make him into a poet: Owen had been writing and studying poetry since early adolescence (Welland 33; Cuthbertson 206). It was the combination of Owen's existing poetic abilities, combined with Sassoon's influence, therefore, that facilitated the rapid period of development that he entered into while at Craiglockhart.

Owen and Sassoon's first meeting took place either on, or around, 17 August 1917, around a fortnight after Sassoon was admitted to Craiglockhart. In a letter to his mother, written prior to his first meeting with Sassoon, Owen wrote with great emotion about Sassoon's poetry, stating that 'Nothing like his trench life sketches has ever been written or ever will be written. Shakespeare reads vapid after these. Not of course because Sassoon is a greater artist, but because of the subjects' (*CL* 484-5). Owen's words make clear that he was deeply moved by Sassoon's poetry and enamoured with Sassoon's use of the war as subject. For Owen, who had long hoped that the war would provide him with a subject for his poems, Sassoon's example was one to be admired. Norgate posits that Sassoon's example was 'profoundly liberating' for Owen due to the fact that:

> he [Owen] had recognised the image of his own war experience, and had seen the possibility of articulating it. Owen's breakdown in the face of battle need no longer remain an inner fear, a secret, isolating knowledge: it could be turned outwards and expressed in poetry.

('Shell-shock and Poetry: Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart Hospital'13-14)

Owen finally struck up the courage to introduce himself to Sassoon on the pretext of asking him to sign copies of *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems.* Sassoon was not immediately struck with Owen after their first meeting. In *Siegfried's Journey*, he recalls his impression that Owen 'seemed an interesting little chap but had not struck me as being remarkable', while admitting that 'it was pleasant to have discovered that there was another poet in the hospital' (58). As Owen left Sassoon's room, the older poet dispensed with a piece of advice that Owen immediately took to heart: 'Sweat your guts out writing poetry!' (*CL* 486). Almost immediately, Owen began work on 'The Dead-Beat', a new poem 'in Sassoon's style' (*CL* 486). He included a copy in a letter written to his cousin Leslie Gunston, with whom he exchanged verse on a regular basis, on 22 August.

The draft of 'The Dead-Beat' sent to Gunston is wholly derivative of Sassoon's style but is notable in engaging directly with the war through the poem's trench setting. In the first stanza, Owen describes the trenches in realistic detail, even including the harrowing description of the soldier subject's 'blue pal there, feeding fifty rats' (11). The middle stanza reveals that the soldier's thoughts of Britain have made him mad rather than his war experiences, this being an attack on civilians of a very Sassoonish type. The poem's conclusion further apes Sassoon's style as Owen uses direct speech to quote the words of an unsympathetic doctor who celebrates the death of the soldier subject. 'That dirt / You sent me down last night's just died. So glad!' (20), the doctor exclaims, leaving the reader shocked at his disregard for the dead soldier's mental anguish and suffering. Sassoon's response to the poem was muted, perhaps because he found it so imitative of his own work. Sassoon admitted to being 'struck with' the poem overall but was uncertain about the 'facetious' middle section, a judgement that caused Owen to conclude that 'the piece as a whole is no good' and to abandon the draft (*CL* 486).

In mimicking Sassoon's style in his own poetry, Owen engaged in an already established pattern of behaviour that enabled him to develop his poetic skills. Owen's love of poetry had been awakened in 1911 by his interest in Keats. Keats was the first poet whose style Owen mimicked but, as is identified by Dominic Hibberd in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*:

> This sort of exercise was to be typical. Whenever he [Owen] found a new poet he would look for things to imitate that he could learn by practice. Without any lessening in reverence he could examine a Keats sonnet as he examined a plant, noting its structure and special characteristics. (68)

The French poet Laurent Tailhade was another figure from whom Owen learned through mimicry. Owen was introduced to him in August 1914 by his employers the Légers, with whom he was living in Bagnères-de-Bigorre near the Pyrénées. Inspired by Tailhade's involvement in the French Decadent movement of the late 1800s, Owen studied both Tailhade's poetry and the key texts of the movement, noting their exploration of the themes of pain, suffering and religion, combined with their use of opulent language. His study of the French decadents also served to re-awaken Owen's mind to the use of sonorous sound effects. These included the 'alliterative and assonant patterns' of Shelley, Keats and Hopkins that had interested him years before, as is identified by Masson in 'Wilfred Owen's Free Phoenetic Patterns: Their Style and Function' (360). In 'Half-Rhyme in Wilfred Owen: Its Derivation and Use', Dennis Welland posits that Tailhade might also have influenced Owen's development of pararhyme by introducing Owen to the poetry of Jules Romains, whose use of accord riche ('when all elements of the syllable other than the vowel correspond (*ruche/rêche*)') in his collection *Odes et Prières* (1913) 'may well have been responsible for suggesting to Owen's sensitive ear the haunting cadences of half-rhyme' (232; 233).

Owen thus reverted to an already established pattern of behaviour when he started to study and mimic the poetry of Sassoon, it being a process that enabled him to maximise his opportunities for learning and to develop his existing poetic sensibilities. Through his mimicry of Sassoon, Owen demonstrated his willingness to engage with the war as a subject for poetry

and he completed four poems in the weeks after their first meeting. These were the aforementioned ‘The Dead-Beat’, ‘The Chances’, ‘The Next War’ and ‘Inspection’.

Owen’s use of Sassoonish vernacular in ‘The Chances’ not only lends immediacy to the speaker’s words but heightens the reader’s horror at the soldiers’ wounds. One of the group dies in a shell blast and is ‘blown to chops’ (9), while the propagandistic image of the brave soldier is challenged through the speaker’s desire for a ‘blighty’ (14) wound. The poem’s conclusion too, is shocking in describing the pitiful state of the war’s mental casualties. Here, we learn that Jimmy, who in the first stanza stated his belief that only ‘five things can happen’ (4) to a soldier in battle is ‘wounded, killed, and pris’ner, all the lot, / The flamin’ lot all rolled in one. Jim’s mad’ (15-16). Owen’s description of the devastating nature of war neuroses is subtle indeed: Jim is ‘wounded’ because his condition has rendered him incapable, ‘killed’ because his former self has been destroyed and ‘pris’ner’ because he is held in thrall by his traumatic memories.

‘The Next War’ is likewise memorable, this time due to Owen’s inspired personification of death, which makes powerfully clear the omnipresent threat of obliteration that accompanies front line experience. Soldiers’ intimacy with death, as emphasised by Owen’s use of personification, allows him to explore the secret knowledge of the troops: they understand that ‘better men would come, / And greater wars’ (12-13), but continue fighting in order to triumph over death, rather than supporting notions of national aggrandisement. ‘Inspection’ is a more philosophical poem whose soldier subject who is upbraided for having a bloodstain on his uniform while on parade. The third verse’s apologia offers a philosophical rumination on war, as the soldier’s reference to ‘Young blood’ being the world’s ‘great objection’ (14) makes clear the senselessness of the conflict in describing the fact that the most biologically vigorous of the species, the young, are sacrificed in war. The speaker’s reference to himself and his fellow soldiers as being ‘duly white-washed’ (15) conjures an image of the war as being a

blood-letting carried out on a generational scale while the final line's wry assertion that, after the conflict, 'The race will bear Field-Marshall God's inspection' (16) completes Owen's acerbic attack on the war in stating that the wider human race will be held to account for their immoral actions.

The war poems dating from the early weeks of Owen's acquaintance with Sassoon bear the unmistakeable influence of Owen's new mentor. Sassoon provided Owen with an example to follow when it came to the use of the war as the subject for his poetry. However, while these works indicate Owen's willingness to engage with his new subject, there is ample evidence to suggest that Owen remained wary of contemplating the war's realities too deeply. In 'The Next War', the humanising personification of death in the trenches reduces its power to distress by describing death as a comrade in arms, while both 'Inspection' and 'The Chances' keep traumatic experience at both temporal and geographical removes, as their speakers reflect on their experiences in the line both after the fact and from a position of safety. Sassoon had shown Owen how the war might be used as a subject for poetry, but it was Owen's doctor, Arthur Brock, who enabled Owen to take the war as his subject by helping him to confront his traumatic memories through articulation.

The seismic influence of Brock on Wilfred Owen has been understated by critics and he remains relatively overlooked in studies of Owen's creative development. Many critics do little more than pay lip service to Brock's influence on Owen, having failed to examine his writing on the topic of neurasthenia in detail and to identify its identifiable legacy within Owen's poetry. In the following section, it will be shown that Owen's contact with Brock was crucial to his subsequent poetic development. This will be argued with reference to Brock's therapeutic method and through close readings of a selection of Owen's Craiglockhart poems which can be seen as embodying Brock's teachings as to how to move from the repression to the articulation of traumatic experience.

The relative lack of published accounts of Brock's therapeutic method has led to uncertainty among scholars regarding the issue of his influence on Owen's poetic development. Brock's method is most often discussed with relation to his belief in the importance of ergotherapy and the social aspect of recovery, as was first emphasised in Dominic Hibberd's article, 'A Sociological Cure for Shellshock: Dr. Brock and Wilfred Owen' (1977). This has caused the sociological aspect of Brock's method to dominate in studies of his work and has led to criticism of his treatment method. In *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War Poets*, Adrian Caesar states that 'it is unlikely that Brock's "ergotherapy" did anything to resolve [the] tensions', embodied in Owen's ambivalent response to the war (160). He further concludes that Owen's transcription of his nightmares into verse suggests 'a confrontation with the horrors of his psyche which Brock's overt therapies seemed to ignore if not exacerbate' (149). In *The Poetry of Shell Shock: Wartime Trauma and Healing in Wilfred Owen, Ivor Gurney and Siegfried Sassoon*, Daniel Hipp, like Caesar, criticises Brock's ergotherapy for failing to engage with the individual's traumatic experiences, arguing that Brock's treatment of Owen avoided confrontation with 'the central trauma and conflict within Owen's specific experience which had caused his condition' (59). It is by examining the three stages of Brock's therapeutic method in greater detail that we can appreciate that Brock's method did, indeed, do much to ease the psychological discomfort of his patients and encourage them to confront their traumatic memories.

In 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', written while Brock was working at Craiglockhart in 1918, Brock outlines the three steps involved in treating his neurasthenic patients. He lists these as being: '1) Psychoanalysis […] 2) Therapeutic conversations […] 3) Ergotherapy' (30). Psychoanalysis was not a significant part of Brock's method, as it was used only to ascertain the cause of his patients' condition. Brock believed that the causes of neurasthenia were either '(1) "environmental"—due to circumstances, and (2) "organismal"—personal,

individual' (31). For Owen, any discussions that resulted from Brock's psychoanalytic investigations would certainly have resonated. During his time in the line, he had experienced first-hand the 'environmental' strains of war service: his first foray into the lines was in January 1917 in freezing conditions so extreme that he described himself as 'being wretched beyond my previous imagination', had suffered 'seventh hell' in an advanced post in No Man's Land and had also been hospitalised in mid-March 1917 after falling into a shell-hole (*CL* 428; 427; 443). In 'organismal' terms, Owen, as an officer, had experienced first-hand of the strains of command in addition to experiencing the mental collapse that had seen him sent to Craiglockhart.

After uncovering the factors that had contributed to his patients' breakdown through psychoanalysis, Brock proceeded to examine these in greater detail. He says little about this step in 'The Re-Education of the Adult', stating only that '"Therapeutic conversations" constitute the stage between analysis and re-synthesis—the point at which re-education proper begins' (31). This second stage of Brock's treatment confirms that a negotiation of his patients' trauma did take place. As the title of this stage of Brock's treatment makes clear, these discussions were curative in nature, while the use of 'conversations' in plural form emphasises the fact that Brock devoted considerable time to this stage of his cure.

A statement made in print by Brock himself can be taken as evidence of the fact that his treatment method did indeed involve the patient engaging with his traumatic experiences. In *Health and Conduct*, Brock discusses the success of his interactions with Owen and states that Owen was 'one who [had] in the most literal sense "faced the phantoms of the mind"' (172). This statement is surely unequivocal confirmation of the fact that Owen had confronted his traumatic memories, given Brock's evaluation that he had done this 'in the most literal sense'. Furthermore, given Craiglockhart's progressive ethos, which emphasised the importance of engaging with, and articulating, traumatic memories, it is highly unlikely that Brock would have implemented a treatment method that avoided such an interaction.

Furthermore, Brock's emphasis on the holistic health of his patients makes it further doubtful that he would not have attended to the source of his patient's trauma.

The extent to which Brock encouraged Owen to transmute his traumatic memories into poetry is another source of uncertainty. In 'Therapeutic Measures: *The Hydra* and Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart War Hospital', Meredith Martin takes as given the fact that Brock prescribed poetry writing for his patients, writing that 'the therapeutic measures of meter were used as a method of ordering a neurasthenic patient's chaotic psyche' (37). This was certainly not the case: Brock himself advised against the dangers of such a prescriptive approach. In the article, 'The War Neurasthenic: A Note on Methods of Reintegrating him with his Environment', published in *The Lancet* on 23 March 1918, Brock emphatically states that 'the principle of "Art for Art's sake" is obviously untenable' (436). In *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd is certainly closer to the truth of the matter where he identifies that 'We do not know what part Brock played, if any, in getting Owen "to face the phantoms of the mind" through writing poetry,' but posits that 'it is possible that the doctor encouraged such writing as a therapeutic exercise' (93). Though it is impossible to confirm whether Brock encouraged Owen to write poetry as part of his therapy, it is possible to discern evidence of Owen's engagement with Brock's methods within his poetry. This is most prominent in 'The Sentry' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est', two poems on which Owen started work while being treated at Craiglockhart. Owen's confrontation of traumatic memory is suggested by the sensory vividness of both works while their content provides evidence of Owen engaging with the causes of his neurasthenia in terms of the 'environmental' and 'organismal' factors of Brock's method. Finally, both poems embody the tension between the repression and articulation of experience that indicates Owen's progress as a patient of Craiglockhart.

In both 'The Sentry' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est' there is a connection between the content of the poems and Owen's lived experience. The events

described in ‘The Sentry’ are almost identical to Owen’s accounts of his experiences in the line in early 1917. On 16 January 1917, Owen wrote to his mother, telling her that he ‘had suffered seventh hell’ in ‘an advanced post, that is, a “dug-out” in the middle of No Man’s Land’ and admitting ‘Those fifty hours were the agony of my happy life’ (*CL* 427). Owen, like the poem’s speaker, was also witness to the blinding of a sentry for whom he was responsible (*CL* 428). There is not such an explicit link between Owen’s wartime experiences and ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’; however, the speaker’s officer status mirrors Owen’s own. Furthermore, in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd links Owen’s letter of the 6 April, in which he describes his platoon being relieved in the night and being ‘all half dead with fatigue’ with the content of ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, positing that the gas attack described in the poem may have occurred that night (294).

The sensory vividness of both poems is striking and redolent of personal memory. Santanu Das discusses the rich, sensory quality of Owen’s verse in ‘Reframing First World War Poetry’, the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War*. Here, he acknowledges both the enthralling nature of Owen’s depictions of experience and their graphic intensity. He states that, out ‘of all the trench poets, Owen is . . . the one who draws us, Caravaggio-like, into moments of extreme sense experience’ (17). It is interesting to note the parallel between Das’s description of Owen’s poems as describing moments of ‘extreme sense experience’ and the language used by William Brown in his article ‘The Treatment of Cases of Shell Shock in an Advanced Neurological Centre’. Here, Brown gave an account of his work in France between November 1916 and February 1918, after which time he was transferred to Craiglockhart. In the article, he described the ‘process of “working off” repressed emotion’, stating that it was ‘the essential therapeutic process in dealing with the majority of war psychoneuroses’ (198). He then described this method as being one in which ‘the patient goes through his original terrifying experiences again, his memories recurring with hallucinatory

vividness' (198). The 'extreme sense experience' of Owen's poems, as identified by Das, might thus be linked to Owen's therapeutic conversations with Brock, in which he may have been encouraged to revisit his traumatic memories and to articulate them as a means of reducing their power to distress.

The 'hallucinatory vividness' of recalled memories is suggested in the sense world of both poems. In 'The Sentry', each of the five senses are assailed. There is the sound of the bombardment, 'shell on frantic shell' (2), the 'Buffeting' (12) of shell blasts, and onomatopoeic assonance of 'thud! flump! thud! down the steep steps came thumping' (13) to describe the falling sentry. The reader's sight is appealed to in descriptions of light of the officer's 'flame' (19) and the darkness that falls in the poem's closing lines. The poem also has a rich tactile quality, as rendered in descriptions of the 'slime' (4), 'slush' (5) and 'clay' (6) of the dugout. The poem is also thick with scent. The air of the dugout is dense 'with a murk of air' (7) and, in an inspired use of synaesthesia, Owen describes that the dugout 'stank old, and sour' (7), a conflation of smell and taste that is rendered horrific when the speaker ponders whether 'corpses' (10) are buried there. In 'Dulce et Decorum Est', too, the reader enters a world that is richly evoked through multiple appeals to the senses. We can hear the soldiers' 'coughing' (2), feel the 'sludge' (2) that sucks at their feet as they walk, and both see and hear the 'blood / Come gargling' (22) from the gassed man's lungs. In both cases, the level of descriptive detail suggests that Owen is transporting himself back into the moment of trauma.

In 'The Re-Education of the Adult', Brock identified that he used psychoanalysis with his patients to ascertain whether their condition had an 'environmental' or 'organismal' root (31), this process being contingent on his patient engaging with, and articulating, his experiences. In 'The Sentry', Owen's description of the terrible circumstances to which the soldiers are exposed – a heavy bombardment, a fast-flooding dug-out, the blinding of one of their number – suggests an engagement with the environmental, or

external, factors that contributed to his breakdown. In ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, these environmental factors are likewise engaged with through the description of the war’s negative impact on the soldiers in the first stanza. They are exhausted, old before their years, and incapacitated as a result of their experiences. Indeed, the external environment’s ability to inflict trauma is explicitly stated in the reference to ‘the haunting flares’ that light the scene (3). Here, Owen’s use of transferred epithet makes clear that the light of the flare haunts the marching soldiers in illuminating a horrific landscape imbued with the power to traumatise.

In both poems, too, there is an exploration of the ‘organismal’ factors that contribute to mental collapse in wartime. In both ‘The Sentry’ and ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, the officer speaker, whose military rank echoes Owen’s own, is appealed to by the suffering soldier under his command and is left traumatised by the encounter. In ‘The Sentry’, the blinded soldier turns to the speaker for reassurance, saying ‘O sir – my eyes, – I’m blind, – I’m blind, – I’m blind’ (18), while, in ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, the gassed soldier ‘plunges’ (16) at his superior. In both poems, the speaker’s distress results from his position of authority: as a man responsible for his men, he is, in both poems, placed in a situation that he cannot resolve. In ‘The Sentry’, he cannot give the sentry back his sight, while in “Dulce et Decorum Est”, he cannot help the man who fails to put his gas mask on in time.

It is this organismal strain that is the root of trauma, as is made clear in the image of the speakers of both poems being haunted by watching eyes. Both speakers remain unsettled, in the present, by their experiences. ‘Eyeballs, huge-bulged like squids, / Watch my dreams still’ (23-4), the speaker of ‘The Sentry’ confesses, while the speaker of ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’ admits that ‘In my dreams, before my helpless sight, / He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning’ (15-6).

In ‘The Sentry’, it is notable that the blinding of the sentry is not the supreme moment of trauma within the poem. Rather, it is after the speaker describes ‘one who would have drowned himself for good’ (28) that his mind

buckles. Given the poem's first-person narration – how could the speaker know that one of his men was having such thoughts? – we must conclude that these thoughts are the speaker's own. Fascinating here is the fact that this description has a basis in Owen's own lived experience: in his letter of the 16 January, in which he describes his experiences in the dug-out, Owen admitted to having felt such strain that he entertained thoughts of suicide. 'I nearly broke down and let myself drown in the water that was now slowly rising over my knees', Owen confesses to his mother (*CL* 427). If the poem is read as the document of Owen's traumatic memories, it is this confrontation with his suicidal thoughts that proves most distressing as it is at this point that a tension between repression and articulation opens within the poem. The speaker's admission to having contemplated suicide is followed by the statement 'I try not to remember these things now' (29). This is a telling admission of engaging in the willed repression of these upsetting thoughts, which is then followed by the statement 'Let Dread hark back for one word' (30). It is as though the poem's speaker has been taught the dangers of repressing troubling experiences as he quickly counters his statement of attempting to consciously control his memories with a statement that he will open himself up to them. This is a reading pursued by Daniel Hipp, who identifies as being significant the fact that the speaker 'will not change the subject to drive the memory back to the unconscious where it will recur through nightmare, but he will instead consciously give it a voice' (*Poetry of Shell Shock* 51). What Hipp does not acknowledge, however, is the fact that the speaker attempts to limit his ability to feel when he opens himself up to experiencing the 'Dread' (30) that accompanies his memories: the speaker says that he will 'Let Dread hark back for one word only' (30). While it is positive indeed that the speaker can engage with, and identify, the emotion that he is feeling, it is notable that his attempts to limit his engagement with this emotion fail. This is made clear by Owen's inspired construction of this poetic line: 'Let Dread hark back for one word only: how' (30). Here, the caesura created by the colon puts the poem into momentary

stasis, echoing the momentary nature of the speaker's control over his traumatic memories, before the placement of 'how' at the end of the line plunges the poem back into his memories of the dug-out. It is notable that the speaker's memories overwhelm him, returning him to the moment of trauma in all their sensory vividness, where the poem ends with a bleak image of the speaker and his men in darkness. The hopelessness of the speaker's situation is emphasised by this darkness, which becomes symbolic of a state of terror, hopelessness and perhaps the same spiritual darkness that Owen himself experienced in the dugout.

While, in 'The Sentry', the power of trauma to overwhelm and distress is evident in the linguistic failure of the poem's final lines, in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' the poem's structure suggests a progression of therapy. In 'Therapeutic Measures: *The Hydra* and Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart', Meredith Martin argues that the poem echoes not only the status of the soldiers who are 'bent double' but that the poem, structurally is 'bent-double and attempting to recover from the trauma at its center' (51). She further identifies that, in the final stanza, 'the poem's form recovers from its own chaotic center to show the *necessity* of telling, and the bittersweet triumph of steady, controlled pacing as the only possible method for that telling' (51). Martin does not explicitly link the poem to Owen's own recovery but her analysis, above, implies a realisation, on Owen's part, that 'telling' his story through verse was a means by which to deal with traumatic experience. The poem is thus a significant act of articulation, as argued by Martin, because traumatic experience is confronted and articulated. Though cowed by trauma, as indicated by the bending of the poem at its midpoint, the speaker is able to move beyond the traumatic event.

The means by which Owen moves away from the traumatic event at the poem's core, however, is unsatisfactory. For Hipp, the movement from the first part of the poem, which 'has charted new psychological territory for Owen by immersing him in the memory that haunts him while writing', into the 'rhetoric of anger' that marks the poem's conclusion, 'illustrates that, like

the unresolved sonnet embedded within, the poet's crisis of responsibility, though exposed poetically, remains an open wound' (*The Poetry of Shell Shock* 79). Norgate, too, views the transition into anger as problematic. Writing of this tendency for anger to be projected outwardly in Owen's Craiglockhart war poems, he states that:

> Simply to attack 'them' . . . is to court ultimate moral impotence. Blame (thus, responsibility) is constantly being shifted onto someone else, but 'they' too are constantly shifting – families, civilians, politicians, the older generation, military authority, women. ('Shell-shock' 20)

Hipp's statement that the root of Owen's trauma 'remains an open wound' is precisely why 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is such a fascinating document of Owen's therapy in progress. Owen has not yet reached a point of making peace with his traumatic experiences and remains profoundly distressed by them, as is made clear in his reference to suffering continued nightmares and the lack of resolution in the two-line stanza in which the traumatic legacy of his experiences is expressed. By attacking jingoistic civilians for spreading propaganda about the glory of the war, Owen deflects attention away from his own experience and the final stanza of the poem thus becomes an act of articulation in which individual experience is repressed. His attack on those who made the traumatic event possible is thus a gross simplification. In creating a facile causal link between pro-war propaganda and the gassed soldier, Owen lets himself off the hook by misdirecting his emotions, thus preventing himself from engaging with the feelings of personal responsibility that so distress him.

The poem 'S.I.W.' provides yet another fascinating insight into Owen's treatment in progress and can be read as being emblematic of the progress that Owen made with the help of Brock. Its significance as a document of therapy is unacknowledged. Hipp interprets 'S.I.W.' as being a poem that urges readers to challenge their ideas about the war in order to foster a greater compassion for the suffering of soldiers on active service. He does not, however, make a connection between the content of the poem and Owen's treatment at Craiglockhart. He explains that:

> this gesture [as explained above] does not involve Owen in his experience in any way that would aid in resolving the personal crises of identity caused by his shell shock, other than to enable him to grow comfortable with an idiom of stark detail in describing the war. (*Poetry of Shell Shock* 67)

Besides incorrectly labelling Owen as suffering from shell shock, which he does throughout the entirety of his text, Hipp fails to consider the parallels between the poem and Owen's own experience. In engaging with the themes of both suicide and breakdown, 'S.I.W.' certainly does engage with Owen's own wartime experiences. Furthermore, his sensitive handling of the poem suggests that Owen had made a greater peace with the memories of his own mental collapse.

In 'S.I.W.', the suicidal soldier subject of the poem is treated with sympathy, while the description of the environmental and organismal strains of his experience are sensitively handled, thus rendering his suicide an act that cannot be condemned. The environmental pressures explored in this case incorporate the societal, the soldier is told that he must not show his fear and 'always show the Hun a brave man's face' (2) and familial, the soldier's father tells him that he 'would sooner him dead than in disgrace' (3), in addition to exploring the environmental strains of active service. At the front, the soldier must cope with the omnipresent threat of death, 'once an hour a bullet missed its aim' (12), while having no hope of relief. "[N]ever leave, wound, fever, trench-foot, shock / Untrapped the wretch", we learn (17-8), and he must instead endure the "torture of lying machinally shelled" (19).

The organismal strains of trench experience are also documented. The statement that 'misses teased the hunger of his brain. / His eyes grew old with wincing, and his hand / Reckless with ague' (13-15) makes clear the fact that the mental strains of existing in a front-line environment have a negative impact on the soldier's ability to function and a reduction in his morale. Further, Owen's description of the soldier's mental torment, in which he is 'kept . . . for death's promises and scoff, / And life's half-promising,

and both their riling' (34-35) powerfully describes the existential nightmare with which the soldier must contend.

A progression in Owen's understanding of the nature of his own medical condition is made clear in the poem. 'Courage leaked, as sand / From the best sandbags after years of rain' (15-16), the speaker explains as he describes the soldier's loss of morale and nerve. Notable here is the use of the word 'best', which can be read as a tacit acknowledgement on Owen's part that the strains of life at the front, rather than personal failure, were sufficient to cause a breakdown in even model soldiers. It is this awareness that enables the speaker to describe the soldier's suicide as being a 'reasoned crisis of his soul' (29). The poem is notably free from judgement, as the soldier's actions are in not condemned, and, additionally, his predicament is viewed with sympathy by both the poem's speaker and his fellow soldiers. The speaker describes the moment that the soldier put his gun in his mouth as being one in which he 'kissed' (36) the weapon, thus indicating his understanding of the fact that the soldier could embrace death when faced with such an intolerable reality. On finding the soldier's body, his fellow soldiers show the same sympathetic understanding of his actions. Rather than condemn him, they understand and thus act 'truthfully' in writing to his mother and telling her that '"Tim died smiling"' (37).

Thanks to Brock's therapeutic method, with its insistence that patients engage in contemplation of the wider circumstances of their breakdown, Owen had, based on the evidence of 'S.I.W.', succeeded in gaining a greater acceptance of his own neurasthenia. Here, we can conclude that, having been encouraged by Brock to engage in contemplation of the environmental and organismal strains of his war service, Owen was able to appreciate that soldiers who broke down or who contemplated suicide were not weak or a failure for having done so. Rather, they had endured cumulative, repeated strains that would threaten the stability of any psyche. Thanks to Brock's help, another of the strains on Owen's psyche had been laid to rest.

In his descriptions of his treatment method in 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', Brock identifies ergotherapy as being the third, and final, stage of his treatment method. 'The doctor must provide an environment for the patient to exercise his faculties upon,' Brock wrote, defining this final stage as 'literally, the cure by functioning' (31). In this stage of his treatment, it was essential that the patient re-integrate himself with the world around him and become an active participant in it: 'It is a real world in which the neurasthenic, striving to get once more to grips with life, must live and move and have his being,' Brock explained (32). Poetry was a means by which Owen engaged with Brock's working cure, as it fulfilled Brock's requirement that patients engage in 'work in which a man's real individuality is engaged'; furthermore, his involvement with *The Hydra*, as both editor and contributor, ensured that he also met Brock's requirement that patients' work be '*synergic*; that is . . . done in relation to, in co-operation with, not in defiance of, the legitimate activities of his fellow men' (32). 'Real function cannot take place *in vacuo*,' Brock further qualified, 'the organism demands a *milieu* to work upon' (32). Thus, Owen's creative endeavours at Craiglockhart helped to rehabilitate him by reconnecting him to his enduring passion for poetry. By publishing 'Song of Songs' and 'The Next War' in *The Hydra*, and editing the magazine, Owen learned that his creative pursuits could be a fruitful, productive activity within the wider community while also gaining practical skills that might prove useful in his post-war life. Further, Owen's engagement with creative activity, through poetry and his involvement in *The Hydra*, also ensured that his ergotherapy conformed with Brock's ideal that a patient's 'work . . . should as far as possible be based on his previous experience [and] should bear relation to that which he is most likely to take up in future life' (33). Thus, Brock, like Sassoon, helped Owen to embrace his creative aspirations while also showing him the value of purposeful artistic endeavour.

Brock's ergotherapy must certainly be credited with nurturing Owen's creative aspirations and setting him on a purposeful creative path. While

Brock certainly played a crucial role in lighting the touch-paper of enterprise in Owen and helping him to embrace his poetic calling, the influence of Brock's treatment method can also be discerned in Owen's verse. 'Six O'Clock in Princes Street' is one of only six poems that Owen drafted into final form while being treated at Craiglockhart, and was composed between August and October 1917. Out of this number, it is arguably the most significant. Not only does the poem document Owen's therapy in action, its content also embodies the significant lessons that Owen learned by engaging with Brock's cure. The poem's spatial and interpersonal movement can be read as a document of Brock's treatment in action, while its style and content serve as evidence of important lessons that Owen learned by following Brock's insistence that he get his feet back on the ground.

On 8 August 1917, Owen wrote to his mother and described his daily life at Craiglockhart in memorable terms. His words make clear that he still felt himself to be unwell, his reference to being 'a sick man . . . by night' suggesting that he may still have been suffering from nightmares and troubled sleep. However, his words make clear that, during the day, he was dedicated to Brock's cure: he was writing poetry, reconnecting with personal interests and reengaging with those around him. Owen tells his mother that:

> At present I am a sick man in hospital, by night; a poet, for quarter of an hour after breakfast; I am whatever and whoever I see while going down to Edinburgh on the tram: greengrocer, policeman, shopping lady, errand boy, paper-boy, blind man, crippled Tommy, bank-clerk, carter, all of these in half an hour; next a German student in earnest; then I either peer over bookstalls in back-streets, or do a bit of a dash down Princes Street,—according as I have taken weak tea or strong coffee for breakfast. (*CL* 480-481)

In '"By Degrees Regain[ing] Cool Peaceful Air in Wonder": Wilfred Owen's War Poetry as Psychological Therapy', Daniel Hipp argues that this passage is evidence of 'the many roles [Owen] had the opportunity to play while recuperating' and concludes that Owen's words reveal a 'sense of fragmented identity brought about as Brock's therapy forced him into

several roles' (31). However, this was certainly not the point of Brock's therapeutic method, as he himself makes clear. In 'The Re-Education of the Adult', clarifies that 'the element of *separatism* or *dissociation* will be found to underlie all the symptoms' experienced by his patients and that that treatment 'must obviously be a reintegration of the individual, a replacement of him in his *milieu*' (31-32). Rather than being evidence of divisions within Owen's psyche caused by his treatment, Owen's words make clear that he is something more profound is at work. While observing those around him, as described in this letter, we can see Owen putting himself in their place – into their shoes, if you will. It is through this act of identifying with others in his wider environment that Owen engages in Brock's concept of 'synoptic seeing' and, in doing so, engages with an emotional state that would become characteristic of his later poetry: empathy.

In 'Shell-shock and Poetry: Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart Hospital', Paul Norgate states that 'Six O'Clock in Princes Street' 'is in fact a significant . . . statement of Owen's abandoning of his earlier notions of "the poet"' (28); however, Norgate does not discuss the poem in further detail. While it is the case that the poem manifests Owen's movement away from his old poetic style, I will argue here that this realisation was fostered by Brock's therapeutic method and that that poem literally documents a coming down to earth that symbolises Owen's acceptance of Brock's treatment method while also embodying two key poetic realisations that sprang from Brock's teachings.

In the opening stanza of 'Six O'Clock in Princes Street', the speaker views central Edinburgh from an elevated position, watching as the 'Crowds' (2) make their way 'eastward' (2) and 'westwards' (4) along Princes Street, Edinburgh's main thoroughfare. In one sense, this can be read as a dramatic embodiment of Brock's conception of the experience of the neurasthenia patient who, having lost his connection from the earth, observes the world in a state of detachment, devoid of meaningful connection. Here, the speaker is Antaeus, held aloft by Hercules and drained of his strength. The speaker's

elevated perspective can also be read as embodying Owen's position as a poet on arriving at Craiglockhart. Prior to arriving at the hospital, Owen's poetry had contained archaic-diction coupled with lofty subject matters: it therefore lacked grounding in reality and was stylistically at odds with his growing urge to authentically document his wartime experiences. In this respect, Owen in his early days at Craiglockhart was Antaeus in a second sense, being held aloft by the Herculean poetic muse and his romanticised ideas about poetry. If he was to succeed in becoming a poet of the war, he would have to come down to earth in order to connect with, and document, his experiences.

The second stanza describes a moment of revelation that is pertinent for Owen the poet. The speaker makes clear his changed attitude in his statement that he will no longer follow Romantic ideals and 'go fooling over clouds / Following gleams unsafe, untrue' (5-6) or 'tiring after beauty through star-crowds' (7). Instead, he will risk engaging with life on more realistic terms. Tellingly, the speaker chooses to engage with humanity, an act that is not without its perils. The second stanza's closing line, 'Dared I go side by side with you' (8), makes clear the fact that this decision is not taken lightly, nor without anxiety on the speaker's part. This statement provides a link to Brock's therapeutic method in suggesting the neurasthenic soldier's desire to open himself up to the world through re-engaging with those around him. It also suggests a new poetic preference for the concrete rather than the abstract, as the speaker moves from his position in the clouds to one in which he is surrounded by humanity.

Owen's clever use of enjambment between the second and third stanzas indicates a shifting of the speaker's gaze from one person to another among the crowd. 'Dared I go side by side with you; / Or be you in the gutter where you stand' (8-9), he says, moving his focus from one potential subject to another. In the same way that Owen shifted the subject of his attention from one person to another in his letter to his mother, here, the speaker does likewise. In *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd reads the

poem as being an embodiment of the fact that Owen' was making a conscious effort to connect himself with everything he saw around him', clarifying that 'Identifying himself with other people was not only an ergotherapeutic discipline but also what poets had to do' (328). While Hibberd is justified in identifying the influence of Brock's therapy on Owen's behaviour, the speaker's engagement with those around him goes deeper than mere visual identification. Here, the speaker imagines what it is to 'be' (9) the person that he is looking at and, in doing so, exercises his powers of empathy.

The speaker's journey is completed in the opening line of the final stanza, where the speaker chooses a person to engage with. 'Or be you in the gutter where you stand' (9), he says, focusing his attention on a newspaper boy. Here, in both therapeutic and creative terms, the speaker has come down to earth and now stands in the gutter at the side of Princes Street. In terms of his empathetic engagement with others, as manifested in his decision to 'be' someone else, the 'you' that the speaker chooses to empathise with is also significant. He chooses a 'Pale rain-flawed phantom of the place' (10), a newspaper boy who, thanks to the word "phantom" being used to describe him, is evidently largely ignored by those around him. Where Owen might previously have sought out a different subject for his poetry than the poor, hard-working and over-looked figure of the newspaper seller, his newfound ability to engage, and empathise, with those around him allows for a moment of powerful realisation. That it is with this figure, and not one of Edinburgh's urban sophisticates who walk nearby, that the speaker experiences a moment of empathy and recognition, is key. The speaker is drawn to the newspaper boy through a recognition of their shared humanity: the newspaper boy not only carries the 'news of all nations' (11) in his newspapers but crucially, his capacity for empathy is made clear by the fact that he that he wears 'all their sorrows in . . . [his] face' (12). The face-to-face interaction between the two is also telling: the speaker can watch the suffering of the newspaper boy without feeling

distressed himself. Thus, this marks a further progress in Owen's therapy. Owen has not only succeeded in establishing a profound connection with both the ground beneath his feet and the wider world around him, he has also learned that he must come down to earth and exercise empathy in his interactions with others if his poetry is to move forward. Crucially, he can now share in the newspaper boy's suffering; a sign of his increased mental stability. It is interesting that, almost a year later, he would configure his poetic mission in terms of watching others. 'I came out in order to help these boys,' he explained to his mother in a letter dated 5 October 1918, 'directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can' (*CL* 580). Owen is no longer like the traumatised speakers of 'The Sentry' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est', caught in a gaze that inflicts terror upon them; instead, he is now ready to look at the suffering of others and to engage with them.

Owen continued to grow in confidence during his remaining months at Craiglockhart. His increased confidence can be seen with reference to the poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' and in his response to meeting Robert Graves in October. 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' signals Owen's movement away from the influence of his mentor and should, as is argued by Dominic Hibberd in *Owen the Poet*, 'should be seen as Owen's first attempt to bring his own style into line with the views he was learning from Sassoon' (111).

Owen's sensitive, elegiac treatment of his wartime subject in 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' is strikingly different in tone to the poems written by his mentor and certainly indicates a progression in his poetic development. The poem ruminates on the inadequacy of, and disruption to, traditional forms of mourning in wartime. In the octet, the aural world of the trenches, with 'the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle' (3) and 'shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells' (7), ironically replaces any hymns or prayers that might be offered for the dead. In the sestet, the poem emphasises the visual dimension as mourners in Britain are denied the opportunity to mourn, resorting to internalising their grief in the absence of a physical body to mourn.

Sassoon himself was immediately struck with the work and, in *Siegfried's Journey*, described it as being 'a splendidly constructed sonnet' and 'a revelation' (59). He also confirms that his influence on the work was minimal and took the form of only 'one or two slight alterations' (60). Owen clearly respected Sassoon's opinion, however. In manuscript drafts of the poem, Sassoon amended Owen's original 'Only the monstrous anger of more guns!' to 'Only the monstrous anger of the guns' to eradicate any possibility that the line would be interpreted as pro-military. Sassoon also made significant changes to the poem's title, substituting 'Doomed Youth' for 'Dead Youth', thus rendering the poem an elegy for not merely those already dead but the generation of young men doomed to die in the conflict (*CPF: Vol 2*, 252; 249). Owen even told his mother that 'Sassoon supplied the title "Anthem": just as I meant it to be' (*CL* 496). Owen's apparent delight that Sassoon could intuit what he had intended in his title serves as further evidence of the fact that Sassoon's help remained useful to him. Where Owen had initially learned from Sassoon's example at the macro-level by mimicking his poetic style, Owen was now beginning to fuse his own poetic voice while continuing to develop his skills in the form of fine-tuning his work at the micro-level of word-choice and connotation.

A further incident which illustrates Owen's greater self-confidence as a poet occurred when he met Robert Graves in October 1917. Owen described the encounter to his mother in a letter dated the 14 October, in which he admitted his awareness of the fact that Graves might think him merely 'a slacker sort of sub. S.S. [Siegfried Sassoon]' but went on to express his delight that, on reading 'Disabled', 'Graves was mightily impressed, and considers me a kind of Find!!' (*CL* 499). Owen's delight at having his talents recognised by another established poet is clear; however, it is the words which follow that make clear his greater self confidence. 'No thanks, Captain Graves!' he exclaims, 'I'll find myself in due time' (*CL* 499). Having already learned so much with Sassoon's help, and having had his poetic aspirations validated both by Sassoon's positive feedback and

Brock's ergotherpeutic insistence that he pursue his passion, Owen was imbued with confidence in his own abilities. Given the poor state in which he had arrived at Craiglockhart, his confident assertion that 'I'll find myself in due time' is a powerful testimony of the newfound sense of purpose as a poet that he had been endowed with during his time at the hospital. As Brock had stated in 'The Re-Education of the Adult', the aim of his treatment was 'to help him [his patient] to help himself' (30) and it is just this self-confidence that is in evidence in Owen here.

Just over two weeks later, Owen was discharged from Craiglockhart and would indeed have to find himself on his own terms. His time at Craiglockhart had proved transformative. Thanks to his friendship with Sassoon, Owen had moved from the mere mimicry of his mentor's style to embracing the war as his subject and fusing it with his own poetic sensibilities. With the help of Brock, Owen had confronted his traumatic memories and engaged with the causes of his breakdown and, thanks to ergotherapy, had his poetic aspirations vindicated. Yet he also knew that his newfound calling was not an easy one. Writing about the war would entail exposing his mind to contemplation of events very like those that had been his mental undoing and would entail that he would have to suffer for his art in channelling his traumatic memories into his verse.

It is telling that, either in the final weeks of his time at Craiglockhart or soon after leaving the hospital, of his time in Scarborough, Owen worked on two poems whose central concerns no doubt resonated with this realisation. In 'The Poet in Pain', the poet suffers for his art because he is awake to the realities of human suffering. His poetic mission is one in which he will endure the pain of articulating experience, here described through the visceral image of 'words bleeding fresh' (8), due to the fact that he feels that he has a purpose: 'for speechless sufferers to plain' (9). The speaker's steadfastness in his mission can be read in terms of the sense of purpose with which Owen was endowed following both his ergotherapy and encouragement from Sassoon. 'I would not quench it,' (10) the speaker

states, affirming his willingness to suffer in order to speak on behalf of those who cannot articulate their experiences.

It was also during this time that Owen began the initial work on 'Insensibility', a poem in which Owen engages with the question asked by Wordsworth's speaker in 'The Happy Warrior'. 'Who is the Happy Warrior? Who is he / That every man in arms should wish to be?' (1-2), Wordsworth's speaker asks (*CPF* 147). After being declared fit to leave the hospital on 30 October 1917, the question of how, in practice, a man might combine the roles of soldier and poet was one that Owen would have to work out on his own. As the following chapter will show, poetry could serve powerful therapeutic ends by allowing Owen to articulate the troubling emotions and anxieties that continued to distress him after leaving Craiglockhart. It was thanks to his continued use of poetry for therapeutic ends that Owen was, in time, able to negotiate his way back to active service in France.

6. Wilfred Owen: From Craiglockhart to France

This chapter will discuss the legacy of Craiglockhart War Hospital in the last year of Wilfred Owen's life. In the previous chapter, the significance of Owen's relationships with both Siegfried Sassoon and Arthur Brock was discussed in detail. It was argued that, while Sassoon played an important role in Owen's poetic development, Brock's therapeutic method was crucial in enabling Owen to take the war as the subject of his poetry.

In this chapter, a selection of poems written during the last year of Owen's life will be examined in detail. The therapeutic element that can be discerned in these works indicates that Owen continued to use poetry as a means of articulating his emotions and engaging with his traumatic memories long after leaving Craiglockhart. As a result of doing so, Owen was able to maintain his mental health and, in time, secure his return to France.

Wilfred Owen was declared fit to leave Craiglockhart War Hospital on 30 October 1917 and was discharged from the hospital days later, on 4 November 1917. That night, Sassoon took him for a meal at the Conservative Club on Princes Street and the two men enjoyed a final evening together in high spirits. Later that night, Owen walked the length of Princes Street under the cover of darkness and caught the midnight train to London. Twelve months later, to the day, he was dead, killed in France while leading his men in a morning attack on the Sambre-Oise Canal on 4 November 1918.

Owen left Edinburgh a changed man in comparison to the withdrawn, neurasthenic officer who had arrived there in late June 1917. In his introduction to the 1964 edition of Owen's poems, Cecil Day-Lewis acknowledges the significant part that Owen's time in Edinburgh played in shaping his poetic destiny. Here, Day-Lewis compares this period of Owen's life to Keats's *annus mirabilis*, likening Owen's creative progress during the

final year of his life to the year of productivity that Keats enjoyed in 1819. It was during Owen's *annus mirabilis*, a period that Day-Lewis identifies as beginning with Owen's initial encounter with Sassoon and lasting until September 1918, that Owen 'showed himself [to be] a major poet' (11). Owen's time at Craiglockhart was the key by which his *annus mirabilis* was unlocked, and his months in Edinburgh proved transformative to his poetic development, as was argued in the previous chapter. In Edinburgh, a perfect storm of influences converged to transform Owen from a neurasthenic officer shattered by his war experiences and aspiring poet without a subject into a man who had recovered his mental equilibrium, harnessed the war as his subject and embraced his poetic calling.

Sassoon played an instrumental role in facilitating Owen's *annus mirabilis.* From Sassoon, Owen learned how to take the war as a subject for his poetry and gained critical skills in editing his work, while Sassoon's support as an established poet fostered the confidence and self-belief essential to Owen's rapid progress. Owen left Craiglockhart buoyed with confidence. Not only had he embraced the life of a poet; his abilities had also been vindicated by Sassoon. Weeks earlier, Owen wrote to his mother on 21 October 1917, telling her that Sassoon had told him to 'hurry up & get what is ready typed' in order that Sassoon could help Owen to get his poems into print (*CL* 503).

In a letter written the day after they parted ways in Edinburgh, Owen thanked Sassoon for his help and support. In addition to describing Sassoon as being 'Keats + Christ + my Colonel + my father-confessor + Amenophobis IV in profile', Owen added, 'I love you, dispassionately, so much, so very much, dear Fellow,' in a moving statement that made clear the depth of friendship that had blossomed between them. In addition, Owen acknowledged the significant role that Sassoon had played in his poetic development, here describing Sassoon's influence in cosmic terms. In the letter, Owen describes Sassoon as being a heavenly body who has 'fixed' Owen who, thanks to spending time as Sassoon's 'satellite' has now

found his direction. Owen's increased confidence in his abilities and sense of purpose as a poet is made clear when he describes himself as being 'a dark star' who will 'swing out soon' (*CL* 505).

It was not only Sassoon who played a key role in shaping Owen's poetic destiny. As argued in the previous chapter, Owen's doctor, Brock, played a crucial role in Owen's poetic development. Had the dual influences of Sassoon and Brock not converged at Craiglockhart, the influence of Sassoon alone would not have sufficed to turn Owen into the poet so celebrated today, as it was Brock who enabled Owen to take the war as his subject by treating his neurasthenia. In the first two stages of his therapeutic method, Brock encouraged Owen to engage with the causes of his breakdown and to confront his traumatic memories, these being two processes by which Owen gained a nuanced understanding of the strains that had proved so devastating to his psyche and learned how to bring his personal memories of the war under conscious control. These stages of his treatment, combined with Brock's ergotherapy, taught Owen several lessons that would facilitate his *annus mirabilis*. First, in following Brock's advice that recovery entailed linking up his past, present and future, Owen embraced the life of a poet and his dedication to his craft was redoubled as a result. Second, Brock's insistence that the individual's endeavours should be purposeful contributed to the industrious attitude with which Owen approached the enterprise of writing poetry both at Craiglockhart and during the final year of his life. Like Antaeus in the myth so beloved by his doctor, Owen thereby succeeded in connecting meaningfully with the ground beneath his feet. More signficantly, he knew the path he had to tread.

However, despite being classed fit for a return to duty, concerns regarding the state of Owen's mental health endured. In *Wilfred Owen*, Guy Cuthbertson identifies that Owen was classed as being 'permanently unfit' for any duties aside from those 'of a clerical nature' (222), but does not comment further on the significance of this. In '"By Degrees Regain[ing] Cool Peaceful Air in Wonder": Wilfred Owen's War Poems as Psychological

Therapy', Daniel Hipp does not acknowledge the fact that Owen was classed as being permanently unfit. Instead, he identifies that Owen was discharged from Craiglockhart and classed as being 'fit' for duty (29), without examining the terms on which this was predicated. What the terms of Owen's discharge from Craiglockhart make clear is the fact that, while judged capable of functioning successfully in an administrative role, Owen's mental state remained a cause for concern and the risk of relapse deemed too great, should he be returned to more strenuous duties.

Here it is pertinent to refer again to Brock's 1923 text *Health and Conduct*, in which Brock offered his own evaluation regarding the state of Owen's mental health. Here, Brock wrote that Owen was 'one who [had] in the most literal sense "faced the phantoms of the mind" . . . [and] all but laid them ere the last call came; they still appear in his poetry but he fears them no longer' (172). Most important to note here is that Brock is evaluating Owen's mental health at the time of his death, 'ere the last call came', rather than at the time of his discharge from Craiglockhart. Brock's statement thus confirms his belief that Owen had, by the time of his death, succeeded in confronting his traumatic memories while also confirming that the shadows cast by Owen's neurasthenia lingered during his *annus mirabilis*.

Daniel Hipp is the only critic to have examined the significance of Owen's psychological therapy in detail. Writing in '"By Degrees Regain[ing] Cool Peaceful Air in Wonder": Wilfred Owen's War Poems as Psychological Therapy', he writes that Owen used poetry as a means by which to 'heal' his wartime memories but states that Brock's method failed to 'approach the central trauma within Owen's specific experience that had caused his condition' (25; 32). In *The Poetry of Shell Shock: Wartime Trauma and Healing in Wilfred Owen, Ivor Gurney and Siegfried Sassoon*, in which the aforementioned article is expanded into a chapter on Owen, Hipp discusses the above quotation from Brock in *Health and Conduct* and concludes that it is evidence that Brock's treatment could only go so far and that Owen's progress towards recovery would require action of his own. Hipp concludes

that Brock's words indicate that, for Owen, 'plac[ing] the offending images within the poems is a means to conquer . . . [his] fears' (60).

However, as argued in the previous chapter, the use of poetry as a means by which to engage with distressing memories was not a new phenomenon that emerged only after Owen left Craiglockhart. The readings of 'The Sentry', 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and 'S.I.W.' carried out in the previous chapter served to illustrate the fact that poetry was a powerful medium through which Owen could engage in the articulation of traumatic experience, as encouraged by his doctor's methods. Thus, in using his post-Craiglockhart poems as a vehicle by which to engage with distressing memories, Owen does not move beyond the boundaries of his doctor's treatment; rather his use of poetry to confront traumatic experience indicates the success of Brock's method of re-education. Having first learned how to use Brock's method with the guidance of his doctor, Owen has now learned its value for himself and is able to implement it as a curative strategy to aid in his further recovery. As this chapter will show, it was by these means that Owen was able, in time, to negotiate his return to France as a means of achieving his mission as a poet.

After being discharged from Craiglockhart, Owen split his three weeks' leave between spending time with his family in Shrewsbury, and London, where he met with various members of Sassoon's literary circle. On 20 November 1917, the return to duty beckoned and he reported to Scarborough. There, he joined the 5th (Reserve) Manchesters and took up residence in the Clarence Gardens Hotel. While stationed in Scarborough, Owen took on the role of Camp Commandant, overseeing the running of the hotel and managing its domestic staff. Despite his busy days, Owen's dedication to poetry continued unabated and he grasped any opportunity available to work on his verse. Late at night and early in the morning, Owen sat in his turreted room and dedicated himself to his craft.

The first poem that Owen worked on after leaving Craiglockhart was 'The Show', which was drafted at Scarborough only days after he reported there

for duty. The creative inspiration that Owen had enjoyed at Craiglockhart endured, as Owen made clear in a letter to Sassoon dated 27 November 1917. There, he stated that 'My "Vision" [his early title for 'The Show'] is the result of two hours' leisure yesterday, – and getting up early this morning!' (*CL* 512). In the following analysis, the poem's content will be read as evidence of the fact that Owen was troubled by his nerves after returning to duty and it will be argued that the poem performs an important therapeutic function in enabling Owen to confront his fears about the future.

A flaring up of Owen's nerves is first suggested by the perspective of 'The Show'. In the opening lines of the poem, the speaker looks down on a battle scene from an elevated perspective: 'My soul looked down from some vague height, with Death' (1). In the article 'Wilfred Owen's "The Show"', Patrick Jackson argues that this perspective represents a bird in flight, thus serving as an 'ironic deflation of Romanticism', in which flying birds came to symbolise poetic sight and transcendence (297). Examined in relation to Owen's experiences at Craiglockhart, however, the elevated perspective of the speaker can be read as embodying the experience of the neurasthenic soldier, an interpretation strengthened by the speaker's admission that he is 'unremembering' as to 'how I rose or why' (2), which serves as an indication of his shocked state. The image created in these lines further calls to mind the cover of *The Hydra*'s 'New Series', which depicts a soldier being blown into the air by a shell blast, where he hangs suspended over No Man's Land. The speaker's dissociation from the scene is further suggestive of neurasthenia: unable to face the horrors of reality, he views the scene as being one populated by 'caterpillars' (7), 'creatures' (12) and 'spawns' (19), instead of humans. The speaker's inability to make sense of the landscape is further suggested by his use of simile and metaphor to describe the scene, where the battlefield is both 'like the moon' (5) and a diseased body with 'great pocks and scabs of plagues' (5), while his use of the words 'seemed' (8) and 'might' (11; 23) further emphasise his shocked state.

If we continue this reading, Owen's engagement with his own wartime experiences suggests his desire to confront his unsettled emotions. Read as evidence of the fact that Owen's return to duty dredged up old memories and anxieties about his mental state, 'The Show' embodies an important therapeutic process. Here, Owen delves into the past to confront the memories of his earlier breakdown and, in doing so, reduces their power to distress him in the present through the act of articulating them. Owen's earlier letters make clear the fact that Owen is mining his own past in the poem. On 19 January 1917, Owen described the battlefield to his mother in similar language to that used in 'The Show', describing it as being 'pock-marked like a body of foulest disease. . . . like the face of the moon', while, in a letter written to his brother Colin dated 14 May 1917, Owen described looking back after an attack and seeing 'the ground all crawling and wormy with wounded bodies' (*CL* 429; 458).

Most significant about Owen's intrusion into his own past is the fact that he revisits the circumstances of his breakdown. Writing in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd links the poem's closing lines to Owen's experiences in late April 1917. Hibberd links Owen's description of 'a worm, which half had hid / Its bruises in the earth' (26-27) with Owen's own experiences, in which he sheltered beside a railway cutting for days after being blown up by a shell. Hibberd writes that 'an officer ought not to have been sheltering alone for so long, leaving his men leaderless', and concludes that 'There may be a memory of Savy Wood in the [poem's] closing lines' (302). Thus, the 'fresh-severed head' (29) of the worm symbolises the broken-down Owen, while the 'feet' of the worm, 'the feet of many men' (28), represent his leaderless platoon. The negative connotations of the word 'worm' are further significant in referring to a pitiable being and thus suggesting Owen's on-going distress at his earlier loss of nerve.

In 'The Show', Owen revisits his past breakdown to ensure that the 'Vision' of the poem, as suggested in its original title, does not become a reality. We can thus read 'The Show' as being both a flashback and a flash-

forward. *In Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd discusses the autobiographical significance of the poem's closing image and concludes that 'Sooner or later the memory of that failure on the railway embankment would have to be exorcised by a return to France' (135). However, it would not be by returning to France that Owen would succeed in exorcising the distressing emotions associated with this memory. As he had learned while being treated at Craiglockhart, it was only by engaging with past trauma in the present that one could move forward. Thus, by returning to his memories of Savy Wood, Owen takes proactive steps towards ensuring that the vision of the poem's end, the loss of his head through relapse, would not become part of his future. This is achieved by Owen confronting his fears in the present and articulating them in verse.

'Miners' is another poem that suggests that wartime memories were present in Owen's mind during this time. Owen was moved to write the poem after reading a newspaper account of a mining disaster that had taken place in Staffordshire, at the cost of 140 lives. The poem is of interest to this discussion of Owen using poetry for therapeutic ends as an intrusion of trauma can be detected in the poem's fifth verse. Prior to this, the poem describes a speaker watching his fire and longing for the coals to show him a romantic vision of the distant past; 'a former earth' (3). Instead, the fire shows him a vision of the suffering of the miners of the coal, their 'moans' (14) and their 'Writhing for air' (16).

A shocking image of industrialised death intrudes in the poem's fifth stanza, in which the speaker describes that 'I saw white bones in the cinder-shard, / Bones without number' (17-18). From this point, the suffering of the miners and the suffering of soldiers becomes fused. On 14 January 1917, the day that Owen composed the poem, he wrote to his mother. The letter is not included in *Wilfred Owen: Collected Letters*, but is referenced by Edmund Blunden in the 1931 edition, *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*. In the letter, Owen describes that he has written a poem about the mining disaster and adds 'But I get mixed up with the War at the end. It is short, but oh!

sour' (125). Owen's choice of vocabulary is key, as his admission of becoming 'mixed up with the War' suggests that the conflict had intruded, unintended, into the work.

Despite the fact that thoughts of the death of the miners causes Owen's own traumatic memories to intrude into the poem, his completion of the works indicates the great progress that he had made with regard to confronting his troubling experiences. Here, the intrusion of trauma in the fifth stanza is subjected to conscious control at the start of the sixth stanza: 'I thought of all who worked dark pits / Of war, and died' (21-22), the speaker states, indicating his willingness to contemplate the fate of those who die to secure the comfort of others. In *Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War*, Jon Silkin identifies that the poem's conflation of the suffering of soldiers and miners is evidence of Owen's nascent 'political consciousness', arguing that 'The miners are bound by their need for hire as much as the soldiers are compelled to fight' (217). What Silkin does not acknowledge is that this awareness was one that was fostered at Craiglockhart, where Owen was introduced to Brock's concept of synoptic vision, which encouraged patients to acknowledge their connections to their wider environment. It is a result of exercising his synoptic sight that Owen can empathise with all those who suffer similar ills, as is manifested here in the shared suffering of the miners and soldiers who die while the wider populace 'will not dream' (33) of the misery that they must endure.

In addition to serving as an illustration of the fact that Owen's wartime memories remained prominent in his mind in January 1917 and in indicating the mastery that he could now achieve over them, 'Miners' can also be read as performing a therapeutic function in allowing Owen to articulate a difficult personal truth. Just over two weeks before writing 'Miners', Owen wrote to his mother on 30 December 1917 and looked back on the year about to end. In addition to voicing his delight that 1917 had been the year in which his poetic aspirations were realised, 'I go out of this year a Poet . . . as which I did not enter it', Owen admitted his dawning realisation that he must return

to France to fulfil his purpose as a poet. He did this by describing his experiences at the same time the previous year, when he was stationed at Étaples and about to go to the front for the first time. Owen recalls the look on the soldiers' faces, which made an indelible impression on him. He writes that:

> It was not despair, or terror, it was more terrible than terror, for it was a blindfold look, and without expression, like a dead rabbit's.
>
> It will never be painted, and no actor will ever seize it. And to describe it, I think I must go back and be with them.

A few lines later, Owen admits to a telling repression of articulation: 'I have not said what I am thinking this night, but next December I will surely do so' (*CL* 521).

When we return to examine the conclusion of 'Miners' after reading this letter, we can read the poem's closing lines as articulating a difficult truth that Owen could not acknowledge to his mother. '[T]hey will not dream of us poor lads / Left in the ground' (33-34), the poem ends. Here, 'Miners' performs an important therapeutic function in enabling Owen to engage in the contemplation of his own death, should he return to the war. As was the case in 'The Show', the poem can be read as one in which Owen is able to confront, and make peace with, a spectre of his future. In 'The Show', contemplation of his past breakdown and traumatic memories enabled Owen to articulate his anxieties that he might break down again and thus reduce their power to cause distress. In 'Miners', the poem likewise performs an important function for Owen in allowing him to engage with the most troubling thoughts to arise from his decision that he must return to France and, in doing so, confront a spectre not of his past but of his future: that of his ghost, should he be killed in the war.

As the examples of 'The Show' and 'Miners' demonstrate, poetry served as a useful tool by which Owen could continue the process of engaging with troubling emotions and his wartime memories. It was also a powerful means by which Owen could confront his fears about the future, such as the possibility of a future breakdown or the prospect of his own death. As the

following analysis of ‘Insensibility’ and ‘Strange Meeting’ will show, poetry was also a means by which Owen could contemplate his future as a poet of the war and to explore his concerns regarding the means by which his mission as a poet might be achieved.

The precise dating of both ‘Insensibility’ and ‘Strange Meeting’ remains obscure. In his notes to ‘Insensibility’ in *Wilfred Owen: The Collected Poems and Fragments (Vol 1: The Poems),* Jon Stallworthy dates the poem either to the final months of Owen’s time at Craiglockhart or to his time in Scarborough between November 1917 and January 1918 (147). In the case of ‘Strange Meeting’, Stallworthy dates the poem either to Owen’s time in Scarborough in the winter of 1917-18 or to his time in Ripon, beginning in March 1918 while, in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd dates the poem to March 1918 (149; 391). Given their thematic similarities, both poems are philosophical ruminations on how to reconcile the role of the poet with war experience, ‘Insensibility’ and ‘Strange Meeting’ can be read as companion pieces in which Owen explores the issue of sensibility in wartime and realises its crucial importance to the mission of the poet.

Central to ‘Insensibility’ is the exploration of the issue of how to retain one’s capacity for emotion and feeling while soldiering. The poem’s focus on this issue suggests that Owen was preoccupied with this question, particularly given its relevance to his own experiences. He himself had broken down himself while on active service and, now considering the possibility of a return to the conflict, this issue was pertinent indeed: how could an individual with aspirations of documenting the conflict return to the war and retain his ability to function? The content of ‘Insensibility’ therefore performs an important therapeutic function in enabling Owen to articulate these concerns and to negotiate his way towards some form of resolution. Of most interest, if the poem is read in these personal terms, is the fifth stanza, in which Owen questions how the creative imagination might be used in wartime by those who retain their sensibility.

Immediately noticeable about the fifth stanza of ‘Insensibility’ is Owen’s apparent resolve to return to the war, which is made clear in his reference to the ‘task’ (42) faced by those who retain their sensibility. This suggests Owen’s acceptance that he would, if possible, return to the war to document the experience of soldiers. There is consensus among scholars that ‘Insensibility’ documents Owen’s negotiation of how to combine a return to soldiering with his poetic mission, as embodied in the question ‘How should we see our task / But though his blunt and lashless eyes?’ (42-43). In *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd argues that the poem represents Owen’s realisation that poets must complete their task and, as a result of the fact that their imaginations can inflict horror upon them, ‘must acquire the vision of the common soldier, his senses dulled by “the cautery of battle”’ (128). For Daniel Hipp, the question above describes ‘a state of paradox’ wherein ‘To see and communicate means that Owen must look through eyes incapable of poetic vision’, while for Jon Silkin, the question makes clear the fact that the solution for ‘an indulgent imagination’ is for the poet to look through the eyes of the common soldier, contemplate his perception of the world and to use it ‘correctively’ for himself (*Shell Shock* 83; *Out of Battle* 246).

Implicit in each of these interpretations is the conclusion stated by Hibberd in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*. Here, he writes that ‘numbness would have to be an essential element in . . . [Owen’s] poetic development’ in that ‘Insensibility could be a means of control rather than denial, allowing strong feelings to emerge without destroying the writer’ (389). However, there is no such resolution within the poem, thus indicating Owen’s on-going uncertainty, and the question ‘How should we see our task / But through his blunt and lashless eyes?’ (42-43) is one that remains unanswered. Having learned the value of articulating troubling experiences and emotions while a patient at Craiglockhart, Owen knew all too well the dangers of repressing one’s emotional responses to experience. The question of lines 42-43 makes his quandary clear: Owen knows that he

cannot repress his emotional responses while at the same time he remains distressed by his wartime memories. This is emphasised by the fact that it is only ‘a thought’ (40) that is sufficient to drown the poet’s psyche in blood. It is thus little wonder that Owen’s questioning of the poet’s view of the world should be configured not only in the form of a question, but as one that asks how poets ‘should’ (42) look at experience, as though convincing himself that there is no other way to resolve the issue.

The final stanza’s movement away from the question posed in the fifth allows Owen to elide a question that he cannot yet answer and his attack on unfeeling civilians marks an unsatisfactory end to the poem. This is identified by Daniel Hipp when he writes that the poem’s conclusion denies Owen a ‘final resolution or answer to the question he poses to himself’ (*Shell Shock* 84). Having failed to embrace sensibility in ‘Insensibility’, it is in the seeming escape from battle in ‘Strange Meeting’ that Owen can be seen to finally realise the significance of retaining one’s capacity for emotional feeling.

‘Strange Meeting’ is a fascinating, tantalisingly elusive work whose plurality of readings confirm its rich, creative power. Jon Silkin reads the poem as being a pessimistic statement about the impossibility of reconciliation in war, while Adrian Caesar pursues a reading in which the poem is a dream vision in which the ‘living dead’ communicate with one another (*Out of Battle* 241; *Taking It* 163). Denis Welland was the first to suggest a psychological reading of the poem, arguing that the ‘imaginative force’ of the work stems from the fact that it is an ‘alter-ego’ that the speaker encounters in the work (110); a reading that has gained widespread acceptance since. In *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd identifies that ‘Strange Meeting’ is one of Owens ‘most personal’ works at the same time as being ‘one of his most political and wide-ranging statements’ (179). Here, a personal reading of the poem will be pursued; one in which Owen learns the negative consequences of insensibility.

‘Strange Meeting’ is a companion poem to ‘Insensibility’ in that it focuses on the issue of how poetic sensibility and soldiering might co-exist. At the time of the poem’s composition, this issue may have been in the forefront of Owen’s mind: after his medical board on 30 January 1918, Owen came to doubt that he would be kept in Britain until the war’s end (Hibberd, *New Biography* 377). This is the basis on which Marc Cyr reads the poem in ‘The Conscientious Killer: Wilfred Owen’s “Strange Meeting”’, in which he argues that the poem describes Owen’s attempts to reassure himself that returning to the Western Front was the correct course of action (116). Here, however, I argue that Owen is already resolved to return and that it is the question of how this is to be achieved, in poetic terms, that the poem explores. In this reading, the Other encountered in the tunnel is not Owen’s double or doppelgänger but rather a facet of his personality: he is Owen the Poet, forged at Craiglockhart and still to be fully incorporated into Owen’s existing personality.

The speaker of ‘Strange Meeting’ is the Owen of ‘Insensibility’, who remained unresolved as to the issue of retaining his sensibility should he return to the war. He is the martial Owen, Owen the Soldier who, thanks to having dulled his emotions has been able to function and to kill while retaining his sanity, thus ensuring his survival. Having enacted the question posed in ‘Insensibility’ in life, Owen the Soldier has emotionally dulled himself. He has, as identified by Elliott Gose in ‘Digging in: An Interpretation of Wilfred Owen’s “Strange Meeting”’, ‘been guilty of a failure of imagination’ (418). Yet it is clear is that Owen the Soldier remains uncertain as to whether this approach to emotional sentience is for the best. The victim of Owen the Soldier’s lack of sensibility is Owen the Poet, encountered in the tunnel, who reveals that Owen the Soldier killed him the previous day and states that he noticed that Owen the Soldier ‘frowned’ (41) while doing so. For Gose, the Other encountered in the tunnel is ‘the narrator’s unconscious, his primal self’; rather, when the poem is read as a negotiation of the issue of sensibility, it is Owen’s poetic self who is

encountered, who cannot survive if Owen the Soldier eradicates his ability to feel.

Here, Owen the Soldier, is analogous with the Owen in Scarborough who sits contemplating a return to duty. He has made himself insensible as a result of his fears about the role that his emotional and imaginative sensibility may play in causing him to break down, should he return to duty. Through the imaginative *coup de theatre* of the poem, in which these two different parts of his personality are brought into a face-to-face confrontation with each other, Owen is able to resolve this crisis. This accounts for the Keatsian diction of the Other, Owen the Poet; it being a theatrical device by which to personify the poetic element of Owen's personality. Owen the Poet recognises Owen the Soldier as he knows that Owen the Soldier, before accepting the role of poet at Craiglockhart, harboured poetic aspirations himself. This accounts for the look of 'piteous recognition' (7) in the eyes of the Other when he is first encountered by the narrator: he can recognise the emotionally stunted speaker and see his thwarted purpose.

In 'The Conscientious Killer: Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting"', Marc Cyr reads the poem's conclusion as embodying Owen's willingness to take part in the war, with all the acts that such participation would entail. He argues that the poem's closing lines articulate the necessity of being a soldier, and killing if required as part of this role, as it is vital for Owen's poetry. He concludes that the poem, 'brought back from hell', indicates that Owen's poetic mission has been achieved successfully (125). However, Cyr's notion that poetry has been 'brought back from hell' is not borne out by the poem's conclusion, in which both Owen the Soldier and Owen the Poet remain in the tunnel and trapped in stasis, as is made clear in the poem's closing line 'Let us sleep now' (44). This is further emphasised by the ellipses at the poem's end. Rather than indicating that the work is unfinished, they can rather be read as emphasising the poem's lack of resolution. By personifying two facets of his personality and enacting a dramatic encounter

between the two, Owen succeeds in interrogating an issue that has long troubled him: that of the role of emotions for the soldier on active service. Fearful about the possibility of breaking down in future, Owen crafts in the poem's speaker an imagined version of the poet described in the fifth stanza of 'Insensibility' and comes to realise the creative impossibility that adopting such an approach would entail. Owen the Soldier cannot exist without Owen the Poet, who endows his soldiering with purpose; Owen the Poet cannot exist without Owen the Soldier, who must retain his full capacity for sensibility if poetry is to spring from his wartime experiences. As is implied by the poem's elliptical trailing into an uneasy stasis, Owen's challenging task was to fuse together these disparate facets of his personality into a unified, fully sentient whole.

In March 1918, the time for philosophical ruminations as to the role of the poet, and his sensibilities in wartime, came to an end when Owen was ordered to report to the Northern Command Depot in Ripon. His most recent medical board had found him fit to begin training for a possible return to active service and so he waved goodbye to the life that he had enjoyed in Scarborough over the previous months. In a postcard sent to his mother on 12 March 1918, the day that he arrived in Ripon, Owen wrote a few lines that described his new reality: 'An awful camp–huts–dirty blankets–in fact WAR once more. Farewell Books, Sonnets, Letters, friends, fires, oysters, antique-shops. Training again!' (*CL* 538).

It was during Owen's early weeks in Ripon that any hopes of remaining out of the fighting slowly faded. At the end of March, he wrote to his brother and admitted that there wasn't 'the last probability of demobilisation now' and wrote to his old friend Leslie Gunston that 'I must buck up and get fit!' (*CL* 543; *CL* 544). The success of Owen's earlier ergotherapy at Craiglockhart is evidenced by the determined manner in which Owen embraced his task of returning to fitness. Having learned the importance of purposeful function and meaningful action, Owen knew that there was no alternative but to dedicate himself to the role in which he found himself and

to keep his feet on the ground. Faced with the prospect of becoming a soldier once again, Owen's letters make clear his positive attitude and desire to acquit himself well.

Despite the apparent enthusiasm with which Owen dedicated himself to his training while in Ripon, this was certainly a difficult time for him in emotional terms. In the third volume of *Journey from Obscurity*, Harold Owen's account of Wilfred's life, he portrays Owen as being in a melancholy mood when he visited the family home in Shrewsbury while on leave in early April. He recounts that, at this time, his brother was already resolved to return to active service in order that he could fulfil his mission as a poet. 'I know I shall be killed,' Harold Owen reports his brother as saying, 'But it's the only place that I can make my protest from' (162). Owen was steadfast in his commitment to his poetry, telling his brother that it was his singular purpose: 'Nothing else matters.' Harold further quotes his older brother as stating, 'I am going out again as soon as they will send me. . . . and I know I shall not come back' (166).

Owen's commitment to both his role as a soldier in training and his role as a poet during his time in Ripon makes clear his mental fortitude. This matter is discussed by Dominic Hibberd in *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, in which he celebrates Owen's remarkable achievement during this time. While stationed in Ripon, Owen rented a room in a cottage at 7 Borage Lane and retired there during his snatched moments of free time in order to work on his poetry. Hibberd writes that:

> By day he [Owen] trained for the fighting that would probably kill him, and in the warm spring evenings he walked down a quiet country lane to his secret retreat . . . where he could open his 'inward eye' to the experiences that had driven him mad a year earlier. . . . Alone and with no support, Wilfred summoned up the phantoms of the mind, and as they gathered in the shadowy corner of the room he forced them to show themselves and obey his will. (389)

It was during this time, Hibberd confirms, that Owen either wrote or edited his existing war poems (389). Owen's dedication to his task as a poet is a powerful testimony to the sense of purpose with which he had been

endowed at Craiglockhart. Having gained confidence in his abilities as a poet thanks to the encouragement of Sassoon and having learned about the value of embracing both one's purpose and purposeful work, Owen's actions at this time signal his absolute acceptance of the lessons of ergotherapy. Determined to be both a soldier and poet, he dedicated himself to each task with uncompromising verve. Yet this is not to say that Owen's health was fully restored at this point: reference to a minor poem started in April suggests that Owen continued to use poetry for therapeutic ends as a means of articulating his troubling emotions and maintaining his mental equilibrium.

'Elegy in April and September' is a work that has attracted little critical comment: in *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd identifies the poem as being little more than 'oddly undistinguished' (141). It is when the poem is read in relation to Owen's emotional experiences during this period in his life, however, that the work becomes far more intriguing. While at home in Shrewsbury in early April, as discussed earlier, Owen expressed his stoical resolve regarding his return to France and the tone of his letters further suggest that Owen remained unperturbed at the thought of being passed fit for active duty. On 22 April 1918, he wrote to his mother to tell her that his level of fitness had been upgraded to 'Division 4' and added, 'it's a long way yet to the top: and a longer time before I shall go over it; again' (*CL* 547). As the following discussion of 'Elegy in April and September' will show, the poem's content can be read as serving a therapeutic purpose in allowing Owen to articulate the troubling emotions that arose as he contemplated a return to duty.

Most striking about 'Elegy in April and September', when approached as a document of Owen's emotional distress, is the poem's title and form. The poem's status as an elegy identifies it as being a lament for the dead whose composition coincided with a period in Owen's life in which his awareness of his own mortality was acute. In April, Owen was training for a return to France that was increasingly inevitable while, in September, the other month

mentioned in the title, he was back in France on active service. The poem's epigraph is telling when we read the poem as evidence of Owen's emotional distress. The poem's epigraph, '(jabbered among the trees)', is taken from Sassoon's poem, 'The Repression of War Experience', a work which alludes to mental breakdown. Sassoon's work does this not only by referencing the title of Rivers's 'An Address on the Repression of War Experience'; the poem's content describes a speaker recuperating in Britain who voices his emotional distress as occasioned by his thoughts of the war before being driven mad by the sound of the guns firing across the English Channel in the poem's closing lines. Not only does Owen's epigraph provide a clue as to a therapeutic reading of the poem, its reference to 'jabber[ing] among the trees' is enacted in the content of 'Elegy in April and September' as Owen's speaker articulates his emotional distress through references to the natural world.

The poem's most telling references to the natural world are those that allude to the speaker's emotional distress, as occasioned by his contemplation of the future. The early reference to a 'daffodil' (4) that 'daunts me and deceives, / Who follow gleams more golden and more slim' (5-6), for example, suggests Owen's awareness of the fact that his poetic quest may be cut prematurely short. Here, his sense of purpose is undaunted, as made clear by the word 'golden' to describe his pursuit of inspiration. However, he is mocked by the daffodil, as he may not live to see another spring, while the reference to 'gleams . . . more slim' can be read as Owen's acknowledging the likelihood that he will be killed. The command 'And shudder, hope!' (14) further suggests Owen's anxieties about the future. Here, the speaker quakes as he realises that his life may be at its end, as indicated by the symbolism of 'winter' (14). Finally, 'Mourn, corn' and 'sigh, rye' (16) can be read as a further expression of Owen's sadness that he may not live to realise his potential as a poet or to see his labours come to fruition. The poem's references to a life cut short by a premature death are concluded in the final stanza. Here, 'Brood, wood, and muse,

yews' (19) concludes the poem in a melancholy mood that is brought on by the contemplation of death, here symbolised by the presence of yew trees, and the resultant emotional stress that such thoughts provoke.

It is further interesting to note the disappearance of the first-person pronoun 'I' in the poem's second half, in which the war, futility of life's endeavours and the impossibility of continued growth are referenced. Here, we can detect evidence of the tension between the repression and articulation of emotion as Owen creates distance between himself and the discussion of thwarted potential and death that concludes the poem. The poem thus can be seen as offering him a means by which to articulate difficult emotions, but his distress at contemplating them is made clear by the withdrawal of the first-person poetic persona. In his notes to the poem in *Wilfred Owen: The Collected Poems and Fragments (Vol 1: The Poems*), Stallworthy notes that the poem's original subject, 'a Poet… reported killed', has never been identified (*CPF* 184). It is by pursuing a biographical reading of the poem, in which its content is read as manifesting the troubling emotions that Owen felt in April, on contemplating a return to duty, and in September, after returning to France, that we can posit that the elegy is Owen's own. The poem can thus be read as another example of Owen using poetry as a vehicle for the expression of troubling emotions through which he can confront his fears and reduce his emotional distress.

During Owen's final weeks in Ripon, he was kept busy by both his military training and poetic endeavours. In terms of his poetry, May was to prove a momentous month as the tangible prospect of publication loomed into view. Owen's hard work in the attic room at 7 Borage Lane was rewarded when he travelled to London on leave and showed a selection of his verse to Robbie Ross. On 20 May 1918, Owen wrote to his mother to express his delight at Ross's enthusiastic response, saying that his 'reception' in London had been 'magnificent' and telling her that Ross had encouraged him to prepare his work for publication with Heinemann as soon as possible (*CL* 552).

On returning to Ripon, Owen began to draw together the drafts of his poems and to consider their place within the larger framework of a published volume. It was a task that Owen considered with eyes honed by the lessons that he had learned at Craiglockhart. While contemplating the running order of the volume of his poems, Owen took an organisational approach that suggested synoptic vision, in which he considered the interconnections between his poems and the means by which they might be incorporated into a purposeful whole. In *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography*, Dominic Hibberd comes tantalisingly close to acknowledging this fact, when he writes that Owen's careful planning of the order of his poems, in which each was assigned a 'motive' would have made the collection, had it been published

> the only collection of 1914-18 verse designed as a course of re-education, taking the reader from 'Protest' and anger to 'Cheerfulness' (of the troops) and 'Description', and then through 'Grief' to 'Philosophy' or meditation. The end result was intended to be pity. (399)

Hibberd's use of the word 're-education' serves as a tacit acknowledgement of the debt that Owen's planned collection of poems owed to the lessons that he had learned from Brock. From his former doctor, Owen had learned that poetic endeavour, if part of the individual's ergotherapy, should be purposeful in existing not merely as 'art for art's sake': poetry therefore had to be shared with others, as had been the case at Craiglockhart thanks to the existence of *The Hydra*, and it could serve an instructive purpose in itself. The wider environment of the war that Owen wishes his readers to appreciate is one that is suffused with pity and it is through a thematically organised journey, indicated by labels such as 'Grief', 'Foolishness of War' and 'The insupportability of war', that they will be lead to a deeper appreciation of the significance of this emotion in wartime.

It was also at around this time, as Owen dedicated himself to his poetic endeavours with great gusto, imbued with purpose as he contemplated publication, that he wrote the poem that signalled his acceptance of his return to France. 'The Calls' is a poignant work in which Owen not only

dedicates himself to his mission as a poet of the war but acknowledges the conflicting emotions that he felt at this time. The poem is rich with resonances of Owen's time at Craiglockhart and the speaker's responses to his environment resonate with the therapeutic lesson embodied in his earlier poem 'Six O'Clock in Princes Street', in which the speaker was moved, at the poem's conclusion, to engage with others through empathetic human interaction.

The broad environmental scope of 'The Calls' suggests Brock's synoptic vision in action as the speaker contemplates his connection to the world around him. The physical landscape, however, is one that does not move him: the sound of 'treble bells' (5), a 'blatant bugle' (13) and the sounds of 'gunnery-practice' (21), among others, do not stir him to any meaningful action. Rather, in the poem's final stanza, it is the human element of the landscape that motivates him to act. On hearing 'the sighs of men, that have no skill / To speak of their distress, no, nor the will!' (25-26), the speaker experiences a moment of recognition. It is the voices of these men, soldiers, that provide the speaker with the intrinsic motivation to act. The voices of soldiers are not only familiar, 'A voice I know' (27), but they are the voice of collective experience of which the speaker is empathetically part. Having learned the importance of re-engaging with others and, if we consider the speaker to be Owen himself, knowing that he is capable of speaking on their behalf through poetry, this voice is irresistible: 'And this time I must go' (27), he concludes.

'The Calls' is a significant poem as it enables Owen to identify the terms on which he will return to France. In *Owen the Poet*, Dominic Hibberd identifies that Owen's decision was driven by the sense of obligation that Owen felt to follow his calling as a 'spokesperson' for the troops (162), and it is notable that this moment of acceptance is configured in the Craiglockhartian terms of purposeful action and empathy. However, the decision to return to France is not one that is taken lightly. As in the other poems examined in this chapter, 'The Calls' is another work in which we can

discern evidence of Owen engaging in the articulation of his emotions in order to confront the spectres of his future. Most notable about the poem is the fact that no tension between the repression and articulation of experience can be discerned. Here, Owen to can admit that a part of him does not want to return to the war, as he feels that he has already played his part. 'I sit still; I've done my drill' (16), the speaker admits, in the fourth stanza. Owen's anxiety regarding the state of his nerves can also be acknowledged: in the sixth stanza, the sounds of 'gunnery-practice' (21) drift into the speaker's room in the evenings and he admits that his 'small heart thumps' (21) at the sound. The speaker's 'heart' is 'small' as it is constricted by fear, while its 'thumps' suggest that his pulse is racing. The speaker's reference to his heart being 'small' can also be read as a tacit admission on Owen's part that he has been permanently affected by his wartime experiences. This is suggested by the line's resonance with the third stanza of 'Insensibility', in which soldiers scarred by their battle experiences are described as having 'hearts [that] remain small drawn' (27) after the 'terror' of battle (26). Just as the soldiers in 'Insensibility' were permanently altered by their terrible experiences in war so, too, is Owen, whose heart, still constricted by fear, has never fully recovered.

Weeks later, on 4 June 1918, Owen was passed fit for duty and the prospect of a return to France became a reality. His continued dedication to achieving his goal of returning to his former position of command and, in doing so, sharing in the experiences of the men whose experiences he wished to document in his poetry, is made clear in the short poem, 'Training'. 'Not this week nor this month dare I lie down' (1), the speaker asserts, in a statement that makes clear Owen's dedication to achieving his goal and his singular focus on returning to fitness. In the poem's final line, the high value placed on the successful completion of training is reaffirmed once again in the statement that 'None else may meet me till I wear my crown' (9). Yet despite Owen's apparently singular focus on regaining his fitness as soon as possible in order that he might return to France, there

remain clues that Owen still felt the need to use his poetry for therapeutic ends. In this sense, we can read his July 1918 revisions of 'The Send-Off', 'A Terre' and 'Mental Cases' as representing acts of mental training that complemented his efforts to ensure his fitness for a return to duty. It was by confronting the possible spectres of his future, as manifested in the content of these poems, that Owen could engage with the emotions aroused by his impending return to France.

The spectres of future experience encountered in 'The Send-Off' are soldiers departing for the front, this suggesting Owen's own preoccupation with thoughts of his own departure from Britain. The poem's descriptions of men bedecked with flowers as though beasts for the sacrifice, coupled with the description of the few who return, further suggests Owen confronting the possibility of his own death. In 'An Analysis of Wilfred Owen's "The Send Off"', A.R. Jones writes that it is as though the soldiers laden with flowers have risen from their tombs: 'they are enacting their deaths rather than merely anticipating them' (221). Here, Owen is doing likewise. By describing men doomed to die, he can engage in contemplation of a vision of the future in which he will not return from France alive: the composition of the poem thus offers him the opportunity to confront his feelings about the possibility of his own death.

Owen's return to drafts of 'A Terre' and 'Mental Cases' is further revealing in this respect. In *Out of Battle*, Jon Silkin identifies that these poems took as their aim the desire to 'expose and examine the effects of war' (223). While this is certainly the case, a personal dimension also can be detected in both works, as both poems describe distressing scenes that could become Owen's fate following his return to the war. The speaker of 'A Terre' is a horribly maimed soldier with little time left to live while 'Mental Cases' describes the suffering of the mental casualties of war. The title of 'A Terre' is further interesting in suggesting a therapeutic link. To be 'on the ground' was the goal of ergotherapy; therefore, we can read the poem as embodying a therapeutic process in which Owen contemplates a terrible

subject, and a possible spectre of the future, in order to test his nerve. Here, it is the possibility that a return to war might result in terrible injuries and a painful death, while in 'Mental Cases', the speaker tests his nerve by descending into the 'purgatorial' (2) world of the war's mental casualties, of which he was once part, and returns unscathed from his confrontation with the spectres of his own past experiences.

On 7 September 1918, Owen finally returned to France. He had achieved a remarkable feat in doing so, having been declared permanently unfit for active service after leaving Craiglockhart not a year earlier. His achievements as a poet were likewise impressive. Only fifteen months earlier, Owen arrived at Craiglockhart an aspiring poet still in search of his subject; now, he was a man who had embraced the war as his subject, and thanks to Brock's philosophy of purposeful and meaningful activity, had amassed an impressive body of work.

Even after his return to France, we can discern evidence of the fact that Owen continued to use poetry for therapeutic ends to find an outlet for distressing emotions that would otherwise, if unexpressed, put his psyche under strain. Given the fact that he would shortly have to command his men in battle, the maintenance of his mental equilibrium was crucial. It is telling that, in September, Owen revisited 'Elegy in April and September', his own elegy, and 'The Sentry', the poem in which Owen enacts an immersive descent into his distressing wartime memories of early 1917. Furthermore, Owen also returned to work on his existing drafts of 'Exposure' and 'Spring Offensive', in which he also revisited his experiences in early 1917. Owen's decision to revisit these drafts during the weeks in which a return to battle loomed can be read as indicating his desire to settle any feelings of nervousness that arose when he contemplated his impending return to the front line. Here, it is by transporting himself back into his earlier traumatic experiences in the line that Owen is able to prepare himself emotionally for the return to the battle zone that would be the supreme test of his nerves.

In ‘Exposure’, Owen describes the many strains that soldiers suffer, engaging with these in the environmental and organismal terms learned from Brock at Craiglockhart. Here, the natural world is hostile, with its ‘east winds that knive’ the soldiers (1), while the omnipresent threat of danger keeps soldiers ‘awake because the night is silent’ (2). The sudden intrusion of gunfire, described in a masterful use of sibilance, is another sinister threat with which the soldiers must contend: ‘Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence’ (16). Most intolerable of all is the unchanging, static situation in which men in the trenches find themselves, the poem’s repeated refrain emphasising the fraying of the soldiers’ nerves as they wait anxiously for an attack that never comes: ‘But nothing happens’ (5; 15; 20; 40).

Most striking about the poem is its bleak concluding stanza, in which a burial party look upon the frozen faces of the dead. In ‘Wilfred Owen’, Sandra Gilbert notes the ambiguity of the second-last line’s statement that ‘All their eyes are ice’ (39), a description that may apply to the eyes of the dead, the burial party, or to both, and concludes that the power of the poem’s conclusion stems from its description of ‘the death-in-life of the living and the nothingness of the dead’ (126). Here, once again is the motif of watching eyes that once haunted Owen’s nightmares at Craiglockhart but here they are rendered more terrible by the realisation that all within the landscape of the trenches are in some way dead. By looking directly into the eyes of the living and dead, Owen is thus able to acknowledge the great strain that the return to the front line will exert on his poetic and emotional sensibilities.

‘Spring Offensive’ can likewise be interpreted as serving a therapeutic purpose in enabling Owen to prepare himself for a return to battle. It is notable that Owen here returns to his memories of Savy Wood, the location in which he had lost his nerve the year earlier. Both Dominic Hibberd and Daniel Hipp note that the poem’s content indicates Owen’s engagement with his earlier memories, but they do not identify the timing of Owen’s revisiting of the manuscript as being significant (*Owen the Poet* 185; *Shell*

Shock 104). In revisiting his memories of Savy Wood in anticipation of a return to battle, Owen returns to the site of his earlier mental anguish and engages with the memories of the experience that so unsettled his nerves. The final three stanzas of the poem are of most interest in this respect, as it is here that Owen transports himself into the moment of battle. The landscape described is one that teeters on the brink of comprehension: the battlefield is transformed into 'infinite space' (32) that is at the very end of the world, here described as 'this world's verge' (36). In addition to contemplating the searing experiences of battle in these terms, Owen also contemplates its moral horrors. This is a landscape in which men are made monstrous, as emphasised by his use of hellish language in the final stanza, where soldiers are worse than demons, in 'out-friending all . . . [hell's] fiends and flames / With superhuman inhumanities' (42). There is no potential for lasting glory in a landscape such as this and Owen's strength of nerve is made clear in his ability to contemplate the brutal realities of soldiering and to offer his pronouncement upon them: 'Long-famous glories' are here outlasted by the 'immemorial shames' (43) that spring from the war's immorality.

The final lines of 'Spring Offensive' were the last lines of poetry that Owen wrote in his lifetime and embody a stunning act of the articulation of war experience. Not only is Owen able to descend into the hell of war experience, the final two lines of the poem are ones that engage explicitly with the silencing of articulation occasioned by war experience. Here, the survivors of battle 'have by degrees / Regained cool peaceful air in wonder' (44-46) but remain silent about their experiences. 'Why speak not they of comrades that went under?' (46), the speaker questions in the poem's closing line. For Dominic Hibberd, the question is one that indicates the divisions between soldiers and non-combatants, and he concludes that, having 'entered hell', insofar as the living are able to do so, the soldiers 'keep their secret' (*New Biography* 427). For Daniel Hipp, the poem's final question is entirely appropriate to Owen's development as a poet in allowing

Owen to articulate the final truth that he has learned about the war: the fact that its realities could not be described (*Poetry of Shell Shock* 106). For a man who had been encouraged to embrace the articulation of experience, the conclusion of 'Spring Offensive' marks the conclusion of his therapy. Having confronted his demons through articulation, Owen has learned a transcendent truth, namely, that certain aspects of human experience defy comprehension and definition through language.

In the final weeks of Owen's life, he excelled in his role as a leader of men. This was arguably thanks to Brock's ergotherapy, which had preached the importance of meaningful function. Thanks to his time at Craiglockhart, Owen had learned that if he was to succeed in becoming a poet of the war, he must function to the best of his abilities in the role that would facilitate this: that of being an officer. In early October 1918, Owen's efforts were vindicated when he was recommended for the Military Cross for his actions in an attack on the Beaurevoir-Fonsomme line. Yet even here, in what was arguably the triumph of his military career, the tension between the repression and articulation of experience remains. In a letter to his mother on 4 October 1918, Owen told her about his being nominated to receive the Military Cross and admitted to being unable to 'find' a word to describe what he had been through besides 'SHEER'. He also admitted that 'I must not now write' about what he had experienced, which can be read as an explicit statement of the emotional distress that his experiences had inflicted on him (*CL* 580). In a letter to Sassoon written days later, Owen was more candid. Here, he admitted that he had allowed his mind to 'grow dull', that his 'senses . . . [were] charred' and confessed that 'I shall feel again as soon as I dare, but now I must not.' His nerves were, he concluded, 'In perfect order' (*CL* 581). In *Wilfred Owen's Voices: Language and Community*, Douglas Kerr writes that Owen's 'terrible composure among the dying had to be construed as evidence that he had recovered and was functioning properly' (165). The issue of Owen's absolute recovery is made doubtful by the content of his letter to Sassoon, which reveals that Owen was indeed

emotionally rattled by his experiences. However, the honest articulation of the state of his emotions in the letter makes clear that Owen had learned the lessons taught to him at Craiglockhart. The most significant weapon in the battle against neurasthenia was the act of articulating experience. Here, although Owen has become insensible after his battle experiences, he is conscious of this fact and able to articulate it. His words to Sassoon acknowledge the searing trauma that he has recently experienced while also confirming his faith in the therapeutic method learned at Craiglockhart: his statement that he will 'dare' to engage with his emotions makes clear Owen's intention to continue confronting his traumatic memories in order to retain his mental equilibrium in future.

Owen was killed on 4 November 1918, only a week before the war's end. In his 4 October 1918 letter to his mother, Owen had written to her about the sense of purpose with which he was imbued following his return to France. 'I came out in order to help these boys–directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can,' he told her, 'I have done the first' (*CL* 580). It is poignant that Owen only succeeded in achieving the first of his aims, in returning to meaningful function as an officer and leading his men to the best of his abilities. Owen's second aim remained, at the time of his death, unachieved: his poetic voice was silenced before he could write new verse inspired by his experiences in the line in 1918. However, thanks to his time at Craiglockhart and the sense of poetic purpose that had been fostered in him by his contact with both Brock and Sassoon, Owen had, following his dedicated efforts in the final year of his life, left behind a powerful body of work that would speak for him. It is poignant indeed that Owen's time at Craiglockhart, in which he was moved to embrace his role as a poet who could articulate the realities of war, should end with the silencing of his poetic voice. However, thanks to the sense of poetic purpose with which Owen was endowed during his time at Craiglockhart, his poetic voice

endured in the form of the manuscripts left behind after his death that he had worked so tirelessly to produce during the last fifteen months of his life.

This chapter has examined the legacy of Owen's time at Craiglockhart on the final year of his life, it being an *annus mirabilis* in which he embraced his role as a poet of the war and succeeded in returning to France to become a spokesman for the troops. Readings of a selection of verse written during this time has emphasised the enduring success of Owen's treatment at the hands of his doctor, Arthur Brock. At Craiglockhart, Owen learned the importance of confronting and articulating his troubling experiences thanks to Brock's therapeutic method, a process manifested in the selection of Craiglockhart verse discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter has shown that this was a process which Owen continued in the final year of his life, it being a means by which he could engage with his troubling experiences and retain his mental equilibrium.

In the following chapter, attention will turn to focus on another of Craiglockhart's literary patients. There, the significance of Siegfried Sassoon's time at the hospital and its legacy in his post-war life will be discussed at length. In addition to examining the positive legacy of Sassoon's time at Craiglockhart, the chapter will discuss the darker legacy of Craiglockhart in Sassoon's life, where it will be argued that Craiglockhart was the locus of the troubling wartime memories from which Sassoon struggled to move in his post-war life.

7. Sassoon's Revisitations: The Legacy of Craiglockhart

In this chapter, Siegfried Sassoon's time at Craiglockhart will be examined at length. After summarising the circumstances that led to him being admitted to the hospital, the chapter will proceed by discussing Sassoon's contact with both W.H.R. Rivers and Wilfred Owen during his time in Edinburgh. The significance of both men in Sassoon's post-war life will be examined before the chapter concludes with a discussion of the darker legacy of Craiglockhart in Sassoon's post-war life. Here, it will be argued that Craiglockhart was the locus of Sassoon's troubling wartime memories and that his inability to put his experiences in the First World War behind him resulted from a failure of autognosis, the treatment method to which he was introduced during his time at the hospital.

Siegfried Sassoon arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital on the morning of 20 July 1917. He had been sent to the hospital not because he was neurasthenic; rather, he had been sent there by the military authorities after making his protest against the war, 'Finished with the War: A Soldier's Declaration'. Sassoon was already a veteran of the conflict when he arrived at Craiglockhart. He had enlisted two days before war was declared in August 1914 and began his active service in France in November 1916, where he soon distinguished himself and earned a reputation for being an officer of exceptional bravery and skill. He was invalided back to Britain after being sniped in the shoulder on 16 April 1917 and it was then that Sassoon began work on his protest, motivated by his desire to speak on the behalf of the soldiers whose suffering he had witnessed in France. On 15 June 1917, he fair-copied his finished 'Declaration' into his diary and, on 6 July 1917, he included a copy of it in a letter sent to his commanding officer, in which he stated his refusal to continue in his military duties. The opening lines of Sassoon's protest are now infamous:

> I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority, because I believe that the War is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this War, upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. (*Diaries 1915-1918*; hereafter cited as *D1* 173)

The military authorities were unnerved by Sassoon's actions. Any form of protest was troubling, but the issue was compounded in Sassoon's case by his status as a decorated officer and as an established poet of some repute. As a veteran, Sassoon spoke from first-hand experience while his impeccable military record, which included his being awarded the Military Cross in July 1917, gave his protest greater authority and made him a difficult man to discredit. Sassoon's status as a published poet certainly contributed to the military's unease. His first collection of war-time verse, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*, had been published in May of that year and famously commended by Virginia Woolf in her review for the *Times Literary Supplement*. There, she had praised Sassoon's ability to describe the 'most sordid and horrible experiences in the world' in a manner that 'no other poet had achieved' (259).

The military's solution was to have Sassoon declared mentally unfit by having him certified as suffering from neurasthenia. Diagnosed thus, Sassoon's protest could be dismissed as having been written by a man under severe mental strain. The means by which Sassoon's false diagnosis was achieved has become a matter of some debate. In *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves claims that he secured a rigged medical board for Sassoon by appearing in front of the military authorities 'in the rôle of a patriot distressed by the mental collapse of a brother-in-arms' (216). Jean Moorcroft Wilson disputes this in *Siegfried Sassoon: The Making of a War Poet*, in which she states that it was likely due to inside machinations at the War Office that Sassoon's medical board was fixed. Whatever strings were pulled, and by whom, Sassoon was 'conveniently' diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia (383). Following Sassoon's medical board, it was

recorded that he had been found to be ‘nervous and excitable [and] suffering from a nervous breakdown [brought on by] the strain of active service, acting on a nervous temperament’ (Public Records Office (PRO):WO339/SI1440/49289).

On arriving at Craiglockhart on 20 July 1917, Sassoon was in a negative state of mind, finding himself in a quandary after his protest had been quashed by the military authorities. In letters written to friends shortly after arriving, he voiced his displeasure at finding himself incarcerated at the hospital. On 26 July 1917, Sassoon wrote to Robbie Ross, describing his fellow patients as being ‘half-dotty’ and adding ‘I hope you aren’t worried about my social position’ in a statement that suggests his concerns that his being associated with the hospital’s mentally ill patients might render him a social pariah. In a letter to another close friend, Lady Ottoline Morrell, written on the same day, Sassoon described his fellow patients as being ‘degenerate-looking’, a discomfiting phrase that suggests his opinion that his fellow patients were mentally defective (*D1* 183).

Despite his negative early impressions of Craiglockhart, however, Sassoon settled into hospital life and entered a period of great creativity. While in Edinburgh, Sassoon was able to devote himself to his creative pursuits and wrote many of the poems that were published in the volume *Counter-Attack* the following year. In time, he would form two highly significant relationships with men met at the hospital. The first of these was with his doctor, W.H.R. Rivers, and the second was with his fellow patient and poet, Wilfred Owen.

One of the immediate benefits of being at Craiglockhart was that Sassoon found himself with time at his disposal to do with as he wished. Though not neurasthenic, he was required to meet with Rivers multiple times a week to discuss his protest and anti-war ideas. When not in the treatment room, however, Sassoon’s time was his own and he was, like his fellow patients, granted the privilege of leaving the hospital grounds during his free time. The ability to spend his time as he wished was a boon in creative

terms as it provided Sassoon with time to work on his poetry, something that had been sorely lacking during his active service. Writing of his first period of convalescent leave in 1916 in *Siegfried's Journey*, Sassoon acknowledges the negative impact of his war service on his creativity. In August 1916, he had been invalided to Britain with 'some sort of gastric fever' and was grateful to have the opportunity to 'work off some of the poetry bottled up in me, which I . . . [now had] a chance to pour out in tranquil surroundings' (1). 'At the Front I had managed to keep my mind alive under difficulties,' he continues, admitting that 'I was overflowing with stored-up impressions and emotional reactions to the extraordinary things I had observed and undergone (1). Freed from the demands of his military duties, Sassoon admits that 'During this period of inactivity I . . . experienced a continuous poetic afflatus' (*Siegfried's Journey*; hereafter cited as *SJ* 17).

The period of creative inspiration that Sassoon had enjoyed in August 1916 appears to have been repeated during Sassoon's time at Craiglockhart. Free from the strains of command and with time at his disposal, Sassoon could dedicate himself to his craft. Craiglockhart's relatively remote location, too, provided him with an environment akin to the 'tranquil surroundings' that had proved so conducive to writing poetry during his leave the previous year (*SJ* 1). While at Craiglockhart, Sassoon wrote twenty poems that were published in *Counter-Attack* the following year and contributed multiple works to *The Hydra*, including 'The Rear Guard' and 'Break of Day in the Trenches'.

In addition to providing Sassoon with an ideal environment in which to devote himself to his creative pursuits, his time at Craiglockhart brought Sassoon into contact with a man who would have a lasting influence on his life: his doctor, W.H.R. Rivers. Rivers was a man to whom Sassoon took an immediate liking, as he documented in his letters. On 26 July 1917, he wrote to Robbie Ross, describing Rivers as being 'very nice' and adding 'I am very glad to have the chance of talking to such a fine man' (*D1* 183). On the same

day, he wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell, stating, with evident relief, that Rivers was ‘a sensible man who doesn’t say anything silly’ (*D1* 183).

Rivers’s task, in treating Sassoon, was to examine the motives behind his protest and to bring him back in line. Though aware of this from the outset, Sassoon was evidently grateful that Rivers didn’t play up to the military’s charade in treating him as though he were neurasthenic. Writing in the same letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell as quoted above, Sassoon wrote that Rivers’s ‘arguments don’t make any impression on me. He doesn’t *pretend* that my nerves are wrong, but regards my attitude as abnormal’ (*D1* 186). As was the case with his other patients at Craiglockhart, Rivers was interested getting to know Sassoon as an individual during the course of their discussions in the treatment room. In his 1922 obituary of Rivers, ‘W. H. R. Rivers: An Appreciation’, Rivers’s former colleague, Henry Head, identifies that it was through Rivers’s ‘vivid interest in the personality of each individual patient under his care and his determination to give help . . . [that he] developed a latent capacity to influence deeply those with whom he was brought into contact’ (977). This was certainly true in the case of Sassoon, who, from the outset, admitted that his doctor made him ‘feel safe at once, and seemed to know all about me . . . [giving me] a comfortable feeling that he understood me better than I understood myself’ (*SJ* 9).

Rivers’s therapeutic method, autognosis, was discussed at length in the opening chapter of this thesis, ‘Craiglockhart War Hospital: A Progressive Institution’. There, it was shown that the holistic emphasis of autognosis encouraged patients to articulate their troubling experiences and to investigate the wider experiences that had contributed to their current state. By leading his patients towards greater self-examination via the articulation of their troubling experiences, Rivers’s autognosis fostered greater self-knowledge in his patients through which they could meaningfully resolve the strains on their psyche. This approach appears to have been a revelation for Sassoon. During their conversations, Sassoon was able to gain a greater appreciation of the flaws of his protest, thanks to Rivers’s sensitive

guidance. Writing in *Sherston's Progress*, Sassoon describes the fact that Rivers 'gently indicated inconsistencies in my impulsively expressed opinion' and that Rivers 'always led me quietly past my blunders' (13;14). The holistic emphasis of Rivers's method appears to have also fostered a greater self-awareness in Sassoon, who, despite already being thirty at the time he was admitted to Craiglockhart, confessed to being 'really very ignorant, picking up ideas as I went along' and 'always pretending to know more than I did' (14; 28-29). It was thanks to Rivers, he stated, that 'my definite approach to mental maturity began' (28).

While Rivers's autognosis did much to encourage Sassoon's movement towards greater self-knowledge, his interactions with Sassoon in the treatment room were shaped by his military role. Rivers was a captain in the R.A.M.C. who was tasked with resolving Sassoon's protest and returning him to duty. Rivers acknowledges this fact in *Conflict and Dream*, where he states his awareness of the fact that 'So long as I was in uniform I was not a free agent' and that his 'official position' affected the authenticity of the views shared with Sassoon during their discussions together (171; 172). In 'Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties', Elaine Showalter argues that, in order to encourage Sassoon to abandon his protest 'Rivers embarked on a delicate and subtle intensification of his fears that pacifism was unmanly and cowardly' (66). This manipulation of Sassoon is evidenced in the content of his Craiglockhart poem 'Sick Leave', in which the speaker, "lulled and warm" (1) in his position of safety, is interrogated by a nightmare vision of the men formerly under his command. Their questions, through which they interrogate their former leader about his desertion, allude to his cowardice: 'Why are you here with all your watches ended?', they ask, 'When are you going out to them again? / Are they not still your brothers through our blood' (7; 12-13). Read in relation to Rivers's method of autognosis, 'Sick Leave' serves as evidence of Sassoon engaging with the feelings of guilt that were aroused during his interactions with his doctor. Furthermore, the questions posed in the poem suggest that Rivers's

arguments were having an impact on Sassoon's mind-set. The fact that questions posed by his men in the poem's closing line remain unanswered suggests that Sassoon felt unable to justify his current position of safety, thus implying a dawning realisation that he must, in time, return to France.

In *Taking it Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality and the War Poets*, Adrian Caesar argues that Rivers's interactions with Sassoon were further shaped by Rivers's therapeutic belief that 'patients should dwell upon the positive aspects of their appalling experiences'. Thus, by emphasising to Sassoon the fact that his protest had been made on behalf of the soldiers suffering in France, Rivers could make him 'vulnerable to the argument that an officer would best serve his men by being with them at the front' (89). Caesar's analysis is pertinent to both 'Sick Leave' and 'Banishment', two other poems written during Sassoon's time in Edinburgh, as, in both, the notion of sacrificial love can be discerned. In 'Sick Leave', this is evident in the questions of the closing lines, in which the apparitions ask the speaker 'Are they not still your brothers through our blood?' (13). Here, the dead torment the speaker in suggesting that, by remaining in his current position of safety, he ignores the blood sacrifice made by soldiers: the still-living have a duty to keep fighting as a means of honouring the sacrifice made by those who have died in battle. In 'Banishment', Sassoon explicitly links his protest to the love that he felt for his fellow soldiers in stating that 'Love drove me to rebel' (12), and also states that love is what motivates him to return: 'Love drives me back' (13). That this love is self-sacrificial is in no doubt: Sassoon will give up his comfort and safety to return to the 'hell' (13) of the front line. It is interesting to note that Sassoon does not engage with the flaws of his protest here and instead attributes his actions to having resulted from his love of his fellow soldiers. This crucial silence suggests a willing repression of a troubling truth on Sassoon's part; here, the failure of his protest goes unacknowledged while his return to duty is configured in the language of noble self-sacrifice.

Both ‘Sick Leave’ and ‘Banishment’ provide evidence of the fact that Rivers’s therapeutic method proved useful in Sassoon’s case, despite the fact that he was not neurasthenic. Through autognosis, Sassoon was encouraged to engage with his troubling emotions, such as the conflicted feelings that he felt as a result of the failure of his protest. Despite being subtly manipulated by Rivers, who was tasked with returning him to duty, autognosis provided Sassoon with a means of negotiating his feelings on the issue and making peace with the terms on which he would return to duty. Rivers’s treatment method also proved useful in Sassoon’s case as it fostered a greater emotional maturity in Sassoon.

Evidence of Sassoon’s increased maturity can be seen in another of his Craiglockhart poems, ‘Survivors’. Here, Sassoon has come far since arriving at the hospital and judging his fellow patients as being ‘half-dotty’ (*D1* 183). In ‘Survivors’, the poem’s speaker makes clear his rich empathy for the suffering that the mental casualties of war have endured. This is achieved through the alternating line construction of the poem, in which confident assertions regarding the quick recovery of the neurasthenic are undercut, in the following line, with a frank description of the shattered state of the men being portrayed. In describing ‘their stammering, disconnected talk’ (2), ‘boys with old, scared faces, learning how to walk’ (4) and their ‘dreams that drip with murder’ (7), the speaker can be read as embodying Sassoon’s sympathetic understanding of the suffering endured by the mental casualties of war.

By mid-October, Sassoon’s continued interactions with Rivers had brought him to an intellectual acceptance of the fact that his protest had failed. Sassoon acknowledged the impossible situation in which he found himself in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell dated 17 October 1917. Here, he responded to pressure from Morrell to continue his protest by admitting that he could not ‘do anything “courageous”’ because ‘They would only say I had a relapse and put me in a padded room’. It is interesting to note that Sassoon’s acceptance of his return was based on the terms identified by

Caesar, discussed earlier: '[T]he fittest thing for me to do is go back and share their ills', he continued, 'Surely my poems in the *Cambridge Magazine* are enough to show that I've not altered my views!' (*D1* 191). Thus, Sassoon, though unchanged in his criticisms of the war, configured his return in the positive terms of returning to share in the bonds of camaraderie that existed at the front. In the end, it was Rivers who, in Sassoon's memorable words, succeeded in getting 'an assurance from a high quarter that no obstacles would be put in the way of my going back to the sausage machine' (*D1* 196). As a result, a medical board passed Sassoon fit for a return to active service on 26 November 1917.

It was not only with Rivers that Sassoon established a profound friendship during his time at Craiglockhart. During his time at the hospital, Sassoon went on to forge a significant friendship with Wilfred Owen that would also prove highly significant. As was discussed in the chapter 'Wilfred Owen at Craiglockhart', Sassoon's friendship with Owen had a dramatic impact on Owen's life. By providing Owen with an example to follow, namely that of an established war poet, Sassoon guided Owen towards the realisation of his poetic aspirations. Through his mentorship of the younger poet, Sassoon nurtured Owen through a crucial stage of his poetic development and did much to both help the younger man to hone his critical skills and increase his confidence.

Sassoon also appears to have been poetically inspired by his interactions with Owen. Sassoon's prolific creativity while at Craiglockhart may have been as much to do with his interactions with Owen as having time available to devote to his creative endeavours. Having the opportunity to spend prolonged periods of time in the company of another poet may also have sparked Sassoon's creative inspiration, as his mentorship of Owen allowed Sassoon to see the work of another poet in action. Here we must recall the fact that Sassoon's poetic style at this time was a relatively new development. Sassoon's early war poems were written in a similar style to those of Rupert Brooke, espousing notions of soldiering as being a noble,

sacrificial and glorious. It was not until late 1915 that Sassoon's ideas about poetry were challenged: first, by his experiences in the trenches and, second, by his burgeoning friendship with fellow poet Robert Graves, with whom he served in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Sassoon at first judged the proofs for Graves's volume *Over the Brazier* (1916) to contain poems that were 'very bad, violent, and repulsive' in their graphic depictions of wartime experience (*D1* 21). Shortly after, however, Sassoon wrote 'The Redeemer', his first poem to describe trench life in grim, realistic detail and whose soldier subject carrying planks is ironically contrasted with Christ on the road to Golgotha.

It was not until February 1916 that Sassoon wrote 'In The Pink', which he described as being 'my first outspoken war poem' (Sassoon, qtd. in Hart-Davis, 22). Here, Sassoon's continued exposure to the realities of war combined with a stylistic shift towards the writing of 'satirical epigram[s]', thus resulting in the transformation of his poetic style (*SJ* 28). On arriving at Craiglockhart in the summer of 1917, therefore, Sassoon's poetic style remained a relatively recent poetic development. In *Siegfried Sassoon: Making of a War Poet*, Jean Moorcroft Wilson cites 'Dreamers' as being a poem that embodies the influence of Owen on Sassoon's work. The reflective tone and lyrical emphasis of the poem, she argues, serve as evidence of Sassoon's 'renewed appreciation of verbal patterning and music', which may have derived from Sassoon's appreciation of Owen's 'Song of Songs' (403). Wilson concludes that Sassoon's mimicry of Owen in 'Dreamers' is 'not entirely successful' but that the composition of the poem may nonetheless have been a useful learning experience for Sassoon, in that it convinced him 'to concentrate on what he, as well as Owen, believed he could do best, trench life sketches' (404).

Though they initially bonded over their shared love of poetry, Sassoon and Owen went on to become close friends while at Craiglockhart, and Sassoon came to feel genuine affection for Owen. Sassoon articulated these feelings in a letter to Robert Graves dated 21 November 1917, where his

reference to ‘Little Owen’ suggests Sassoon’s great affection for his new friend. Sassoon also indicates his respect for Owen’s poetic talents in stating his belief that ‘I am sure he will be a very good poet some day’ and affirms the strength of his feelings for Owen by stating that ‘he is a very loveable creature’ (*D1* 196).

The positive legacy of Craiglockhart endured long after Sassoon was discharged from the hospital. Sassoon maintained his friendship with Rivers throughout the remainder of the war and Rivers continued to occupy a significant place in Sassoon’s life after the war’s end, during which time he became Sassoon’s close friend and confidant. Sassoon visited Rivers regularly in Cambridge, where he worked at the University, and Rivers supported Sassoon emotionally as he re-integrated himself into post-war life. In *Siegfried Sassoon: Journey from the Trenches*, Jean Moorcroft Wilson argues that Sassoon’s preference for austere living at this time and interest in socialism, coupled with his attempts to help the disadvantaged, such as by financially supporting his former sergeant and making visits to Pentonville Prison, owed a lot to Rivers’s encouragement (136).

In his 1920 collection of poems, *Picture Show*, Sassoon celebrates Rivers’s positive influence in the poem ‘To A Very Wise Man’. The poem is a moving testimony to the high esteem in which Sassoon held his close friend and makes clear the fact that Rivers was an enduringly positive influence. Rivers’s ability to foster greater self-knowledge is identified in the poem’s opening lines, as expressed in the striking opening image: ‘Fires in the dark you build; tall quivering flames / In the huge midnight forest of the unknown’ (1-2). Here, ‘the huge midnight forest of the unknown’ is a reference to the individual’s psyche: while its truths are ‘unknown’ to the speaker, the ‘Wise Man’ brings illumination, as symbolised by the ‘Fires in the dark’ that he lights. Rivers is also portrayed as being a man of great insight, with the speaker admitting that ‘You understand my thoughts: though, when *you* think, / You’re out beyond the boundaries of my brain’ [emphasis in the original] (17-18).

The high-esteem in which Sassoon held Rivers is further made clear in striking terms in the poem's final stanza. Here, the speaker describes himself as being a 'bird at dawn' (19) while Rivers is 'the flying man' (21). The speaker is less evolved, merely a bird, the reference to 'dawn' (19) serving as a metaphor for his intellectual and emotional naivety, while the 'Wise Man' is configured in superhuman terms. Rivers is here transformed into a literal superman: his innate wisdom is a force that imbues him with the superhuman ability to bring self-knowledge and greater self-awareness to the poem's speaker. 'To A Very Wise Man' thus powerfully documents the lasting significance of Rivers in Sassoon's life, in which he acted, as he had done at Craiglockhart, as an insightful guide leading Sassoon further along the path to self-knowledge.

Sassoon's continued friendship with Wilfred Owen, too, was a meaningful legacy of his time at Craiglockhart. In the last year of Owen's life, following his departure from Edinburgh on 3 November 1917, Sassoon continued to support Owen as he moved forward with his literary endeavours. The two corresponded regularly with one another, often enclosing poems for each other's critique, while Sassoon provided Owen with literary introductions in London, such as to the Sitwells, who published the first significant selection of Owen's poetry in their anthology, *Wheels*, in 1919.

After Owen's death on 4 November 1918, Sassoon continued to honour their friendship. He played an instrumental role in bringing Owen's poetry to the attention of the wider public and establishing him as a poet, these actions serving as a moving testimony of their earlier friendship and as evidence of Sassoon's belief in Owen's talents. In 1920, Sassoon was credited as the editor of the first collection of Owen's poems and, in 1931, he persuaded his friend and fellow war veteran Edmund Blunden to prepare a longer collection of Owen's poetry for publication. In his introduction to the 1920 collection of Owen's verse, Sassoon made clear the high esteem in which he held Owen as a poet, stating that the 'poems printed in this book

need no preliminary commendations from me or anyone else' and writing that they were a 'true and splendid testament' of Owen's poetic talent (v). In addition to playing an instrumental role in bringing Owen's poems to print, Sassoon's awareness of the value of Owen's manuscripts as literary artefacts was demonstrated when he donated £100 (around £6,000 in today's money) to the British Museum in order that they could purchase a selection of Owen's original manuscripts and preserve them for posterity.

While Sassoon certainly played a pivotal role in ensuring that Owen's poetry found a posthumous public audience, a closer examination of the fact suggests that Owen's legacy in the life of Sassoon was a complex one. In order to discern this, we must return to examine Sassoon's status as the editor of the 1920 edition of Owen's poems in greater detail. It was, in fact, not Sassoon, but Edith Sitwell–who had published seven of Owen's poems in her anthology *Wheels* the previous year–who completed the majority of the work in assembling both the final versions of Owen's poems and preparing the volume for print. Sitwell had also been in control of the project from the start: only after Sassoon learned that Sitwell intended to publish a volume of Owen's poetry did he intervene, arguing that he was best suited to the task because he had been Owen's close confidant. Having succeeded in inveigling himself into the position of editor, however, Sassoon abandoned the task in January 1920 after agreeing to travel to the United States on a lecture tour. He left Sitwell scrambling to finalise the collection ahead of its publication date in February. Following Sassoon's departure, Sitwell wrote to Owen's mother, making clear her frustration at his relative inaction:

> [Sassoon] has suddenly gone off to America, leaving all you [*sic*] son's manuscripts with me to get ready for the printers. . . . Captain Sassoon has done nothing in the way of preparing them. All he has done in the matter is to arrange with Chatto and Windus to publish them. (23)

Sassoon's departure for America is troubling on two counts, suggesting either that he did not care deeply about Owen's legacy or that he had attached himself to the task to flatter his own ego, given the fact that he

could lay claim to having both discovered and nurtured the younger poet's talents. We can detect a further instance of Sassoon distancing himself from Owen in the circumstances surrounding the publication of the 1931 edition of Owen's poems. On this occasion, Sassoon convinced Blunden both to act as editor and to write a memoir of Owen, despite having not met Owen in life.

In his introduction to the 1920 edition of Owen's poems, Sassoon provides a possible justification for his strange behaviour in relation to Owen's memory. Here, he states that, as a result of having known Owen personally and having shared his opinions about the War, it was impossible for him to 'judge . . . [Owen's] work with any critical detachment' (v). Sassoon's statement that he was unable to view Owen's work with any level of 'critical detachment' is certainly plausible. Perhaps this is something that Sassoon realised only after wheedling himself into Sitwell's work on the 1920 edition of Owen's poems, his escape to America being opportune in allowing him to escape from a task that he knew he could not complete.

It was not until 1931 that Sassoon finally admitted why memories of Owen proved so problematic. In a letter written to Edmund Blunden on 12 November 1931, Sassoon wrote with great candour about Owen, making clear that the issue was an emotional one. Sassoon admitted that:

> I have always suffered from an obscure difficulty in clarifying my friendship with him—perhaps because the loss of him was a shock which I never faced squarely—coming as it did at the most difficult time, when I was emotionally and physically without any foundations. (Sassoon, qtd. in Wilson 258)

Sassoon's words are moving in confirming that it was his deep affection for Owen that prevented him from adopting an objective stance on his friend's poetry. His admission is an acknowledgement of the fact that Owen's death had affected him profoundly, while also making clear the fact that it remained an emotional wound to which he was yet to tend.

Sassoon's reference to Owen's death happening at 'a most difficult time', during which he was 'emotionally and physically without any foundations' is further intriguing in suggesting that Sassoon struggled to

readapt to civilian life after the war's end. We can thus understand Sassoon as being 'emotionally and physically without any foundations', as he later wrote to Blunden, because he was adjusting to a new phase of his life in which he attempted to leave behind the martial self that had defined him for many years.

Evidence of Sassoon's struggle to adjust to civilian life in the post-war years can be found in his poem 'Revisitation', which was written in response to Rivers's untimely death on 4 June 1922. Writing in his diary on 6 June, after hearing that Rivers had died suddenly of a strangulated hernia, Sassoon reflected on the positive influence that Rivers had exerted on his life. 'I see him in all his glory of selfless wisdom and human service', Sassoon wrote, 'I suppose that is what happens to the living, when the living have loved the dead' (*Diaries 1920-1922*; hereafter cited as *D2*, 163). In addition to acknowledging the depth of emotion that he felt for Rivers, Sassoon's mind turned immediately to the articulation of his feelings in verse, as he admitted that 'I have been trying to console myself with words' (164). Sassoon's desire to articulate his feelings was manifested in 'Revisitation', a poem whose very composition was a moving testimony to Rivers's teachings, the emphasis of which had been on the articulation of challenging emotional experiences.

'Revisitation' makes clear Sassoon's deep feelings for his former doctor and close friend. First, there is the fact that Sassoon's recollections of Rivers appear in his 'heart's room' (2). This unusual phrase suggests the magnitude of his love for Rivers: thoughts of Rivers resonate in Sassoon's emotional core, making his heart feel large with feelings of enduring affection. Second, Rivers's emotional significance to Sassoon is made clear in the description of him being a 'fathering friend' (9). This is particularly poignant when we consider the absence of a father figure in Sassoon's life: Sassoon's parents separated when he was only four and his father died when Sassoon was nine. The age gap between both men certainly emphasised the potential for Rivers to function as a proto-father figure for Sassoon: at the time of their

first meeting in 1917, Rivers was 53 and Sassoon was 30. The emphasis on re-education through autognosis that lay at the core of Rivers's method no doubt further emphasised the paternalistic dimension to their friendship as, by highlighting the problematic aspects of Sassoon's character and behaviour and leading him gently towards greater self-knowledge, Rivers played a role like that of a father teaching his son the lessons of life and passing on vital skills. The final lines of the poem are moving indeed, as Sassoon acknowledges the lingering presence of Rivers in his life and addresses his 'ghost' whom he feels 'powerless to repay' (16).

'Revisitation' is not merely a poem in which Sassoon movingly eulogises Rivers and praises him for his positive attributes and influence, however. Within the poem there are hints of a darker undertone, which suggests Sassoon's unhappiness in the present. Most interesting is the question of the first stanza, in which the vision of Rivers is contemplated: 'Hastes he once more to harmonize and heal?' (5), the speaker wonders. The alliteration and long initial vowels of 'harmonize and heal' emphasise the importance of these activities, reminding us of the aims of Rivers's method of autognosis, in which the individual was guided towards greater self-knowledge, encouraged to make peace with his troubling experiences and thereby returned to a state of greater equilibrium. However, it is telling that these words are framed within a question. Sassoon thus indicates his uncertainty as to whether his thoughts of Rivers are nudging him towards re-engaging with the process of autognosis, as is made clear by his statement that 'I know not' (6). The soothing accord of 'harmonize and heal' can also be read as signalling Sassoon's tacit understanding of the fact that self-examination would bring relief from his current feelings of anguish and distress, but a failure of re-education is made explicit by his uncertainty about whether to engage in the process.

Sassoon's lack of stability in the present is further suggested in his statement that he feels Rivers's 'life's work, in me and many, unfinished' (7-8). This suggests that Sassoon feels that he had much still to learn from his

former friend, while also suggesting his desire for continuing guidance. Read in relation to Rivers's therapeutic method as used at Craiglockhart, these lines constitute further evidence of a failure of re-education. In the initial stages of autognosis, the patient's doctor would provide guidance at first, teaching his patient how to use autognosis as a therapeutic tool by which to interrogate his emotional experiences; however, the aim of treatment was that the process of re-education would teach the patient how to wield autognosis as a therapeutic tool for themselves in the future. Sassoon's feeling that Rivers's teachings are 'unfinished' and questioning as to whether he should engage in examining his emotional circumstances suggests that Sassoon had not attained this goal and felt rudderless without Rivers's guidance.

The cancelled final stanza of 'Revisitation' provides explicit evidence of Sassoon's struggle to readjust to civilian life in the post-war years. The stanza is as follows:

> Deep in my morning time he made his mark
> And still he comes uncalled to be my guide
> In devastated regions
> When the brain has lost its bearings in the dark
> And broken in its body's pride
> In the long campaign to which it had sworn allegiance. (17-22)

This cancelled stanza provides evidence of the fact that Sassoon, even in 1922, continued to struggle to adapt to post-war life. The present is here described as being one of 'devastated regions' (19) in which Sassoon admits to feeling lost, as is indicated by his statement that his 'brain has lost its bearings' (20). The intrusion of wartime vocabulary at this juncture is interesting indeed. Not only is the present configured as being a blasted landscape, but life itself is described as 'the long campaign' (22). Here, the war is may be over, but a battle continues to rage. Life is a 'long campaign' as Sassoon struggles to reintegrate into post-war life, while the 'devastated regions' referred to are the London of the present, in which he felt cast adrift and unable to find creative inspiration.

Further evidence of Sassoon's inability to move on from his earlier, wartime experiences can be found in the autobiographical project that came to dominate Sassoon's life until the end of the Second World War. Sassoon first revisited his childhood and wartime experiences in *The Memoirs of George Sherston*, in which his own experiences were thinly veiled in fiction. Starting with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928), the narrative follows Sherston from childhood into his war service, as described in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), and, in *Sherston's Progress* (1936), from his time at 'Slateford War Hospital' to the war's end. Soon after completing work on the fictionalised telling of his life experiences, it was not long before Sassoon returned once again to this period. This time he did so in three autobiographical volumes: *The Old Century and seven more years* (1938), *The Weald of Youth* (1942) and *Siegfried's Journey* (1945).

Writing in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell describes the writing of these six volumes as being 'an obsessive enterprise' for Sassoon that caused him to spend 'Exactly half his life . . . plowing and re-plowing the earlier half' (91; 92). Based on the evidence of Sassoon's dedication to these six volumes, Fussell concludes that 'The life he [Sassoon] cared to consider ran from 1895 to 1920' (92). In *Modern Nostalgia: Siegfried Sassoon, Trauma and the Second World War*, Robert Hemmings explicitly links Sassoon's post-war writing to 'a tension between trauma and nostalgia' in which Sassoon deploys his nostalgic approach to escape his traumatic memories (2). Hemmings identifies this nostalgic response as being a 'curative strategy' by which Sassoon could escape the trauma of his wartime experiences through creative expression and links his impulse to revisit the past to his contact with W. H. R. Rivers at Craiglockhart (3). Hemmings also acknowledges the partial nature of Sassoon's deviations into his own past: the past that he retreats into offers no reassurance, given the fact that Sassoon's revisitation of these years is predicated 'as much on forgetting grimness as remembering gladness'. As such, they offer 'the deceptive appeal of escape', rather than a confrontation with reality (3).

In his discussion of Sassoon's nostalgic impulse, Hemmings links Sassoon's repeated excursions into his past to his desire to escape the memories of his war experiences in general. In the closing section of this chapter, it will be argued that it is by examining Craiglockhart as the locus of Sassoon's traumatic memories that we can better understand his inability to move on after the war. Sassoon's inability to move on from the conflict is rendered ironic indeed when we consider the fact that it was at Craiglockhart that Sassoon was presented with a method by which to work through, and resolve, his troubling experiences. We can therefore understand that it was not Sassoon's wartime experiences that prevented him from moving on with his life, but rather the failure of autognosis.

There are numerous reasons why memories of Craiglockhart proved difficult for Sassoon. First and foremost was the failure of his protest, this being the very reason why he was admitted to the hospital. Having written his 'Declaration' with noble intentions, Sassoon's protest failed when he was declared mentally unfit and sent to Craiglockhart, thus rendering his protest impotent. While at the hospital, his misery was exacerbated by the guilt that he felt on finding himself in a position of safety, as expressed in the poem 'Sick Leave'. Sassoon's protest was not only quashed by the military; he was also made painfully aware of the intellectual shortcomings of his protest through his interactions with Rivers. Sassoon comes close to acknowledging this in his fictionalised memoirs, interestingly transmuted into the character of Sherston as though to distance himself from his own failings. Here, he admits that his protest 'was an emotional idea based on my war experience and stimulated by the acquisition of points of view which I had accepted uncritically' (*SP* 14).

Malcolm Pittock touches on the failure of Sassoon's protest in 'The War Poetry of Wilfred Owen: A Dissenting Reappraisal', where he considers the impact of his failed protest on Sassoon. Pittock states his conclusion that 'Sassoon had, I think, a lasting regret that he had not done what he had set out to do but had been deliberately manoeuvred into inauthenticity and

ineffectiveness' and goes on to state that Sassoon's inability to articulate the truth in his autobiographical account in *Siegfried's Journey* makes clear the fact that it was an emotive issue (208). Here, Pittock identifies the possible connection between the failure of Sassoon's protest and his later inability to give a truthful account of events. Sassoon's idealised version of reality, as presented in the *George Sherston Trilogy*, combined with the ameliorated account of his wartime experiences in his autobiographical memoirs, thus prevented him from moving on as he denied himself the possibility of putting his experiences to rest by not articulating the whole truth.

Memories of Craiglockhart may also have proved difficult for Sassoon as his time at the hospital confronted him with the reality of how precarious his mental state had become at the time of making his protest. Though never officially diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia, there is ample evidence to support the possibility that Sassoon had come close to breakdown shortly before being admitted to Craiglockhart. This is argued by Elaine Showalter in 'Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties', where she argues that, though Sassoon didn't exhibit any outward signs of neurasthenia, the strains from which he was suffering at the time of writing his protest 'could easily be seen as part of the larger syndrome of shell shock' (62).

Examples of Sassoon's behaviour that could be regarded as being indicative of mental strain include the erratic behaviour and reckless bravery for which he became known at the front. Sassoon not only won the Military Cross in July 1916; he was known by his fellow soldiers as 'Mad Jack'. The circumstances in which Sassoon received the shoulder wound that took him out of the trenches in April 1917 are further suggestive of a soldier on the path towards mental breakdown: Sassoon carelessly stood up above the parapet of a trench and was shot in the shoulder. When speaking to the British War Office Committee in 1922, J. F. C. Fuller testified that this sort of carelessness was often an indication of impending nervous collapse. He

stated that, in response to 'prolonged danger [in the trenches]. . . . fear very shortly wore off and was replaced by a type of callousness which sometimes increased until a man took very little trouble to protect himself.' Fuller concluded by adding that, 'I noticed in several cases that when this condition was well advanced a man became liable to break down mentally' (29).

Further evidence as to the state of Sassoon's nerves can be found elsewhere. In *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves describes Sassoon as being 'beastly weak and in a rotten state of nerves' while recuperating from his April 1917 shoulder wound, months before his arrival at Craiglockhart (212). The torments suffered by the recuperating Sherston, in a passage from *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* that describes the same events in their fictional form, further suggests a mind haunted by war experience. 'More than once I wasn't sure whether I was awake or asleep', he writes, of the hallucinatory visions from which he suffered, 'Shapes of mutilated soldiers came crawling across the floor; the floor seemed to be littered with fragments of mangled flesh' (453). The most compelling evidence for the poor state of Sassoon's nerves prior to arriving at Craiglockhart comes from Sassoon in himself. Writing in his diary in May 1918, he wrote that 'I must never forget Rivers. He is the only man who can save me if I break down again' (*D2* 246), a statement that Robert Hemmings accepts as being confirmation of the fact that Sassoon had, indeed, suffered a breakdown in 1917 ('Blameless Physician' 116).

In addition to being troubled by the failure of his protest and the state of his nerves, Sassoon's conflicted feelings about his sexuality also proved problematic during his war service. Prior to the war, Sassoon gained a greater acceptance of his homosexuality after reading Edward Carpenter's *The Intermediate Sex* in late 1910. Though he remained non-practising until after the end of the war, several of his wartime friendships were marked by homosexual attraction. This includes his interactions with Wilfred Owen, the fact of whose homosexuality is now widely accepted. In *Siegfried Sassoon:*

The Journey from the Trenches, Jean Moorcroft Wilson suggests that Sassoon may have written Owen out of his fictional account of Craiglockhart in *Sherston's Progress* as he 'feared that Owen's evident infatuation with him might suggest a homosexual relationship' (245).

At this point, it is instructive to refer to another of Sassoon's wartime friendships, this time with another man who had a connection to Craiglockhart. Sassoon met Frank James Prewett (1883-1962) at Lennel Auxiliary Hospital in the Scottish Borders in August 1918 while he was recovering after being shot in the head in France in July. Prewett was a Canadian who had been serving as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 5B. Reserve Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery before being diagnosed with neurasthenia after breaking down in France. Prewett was sent to Craiglockhart for evaluation, arriving there on 31 July 1918, and was transferred to Lennel a week later, on 6 August ('Admissions and Discharge Registers'). Sassoon arrived at Lennel two weeks later. After meeting Prewett, Sassoon was delighted to discover that the Canadian, whom he nicknamed 'Toronto', had spent a week at Craiglockhart and had encountered Rivers during his stay.

For Sassoon, the early stages of his friendship with Prewett was marked by the 'strong sexual attraction' that he felt for him (*D2* 161). Sassoon also admitted that 'there was some vague sexual element lurking in the background' in another of his wartime friendships: the one that he shared with Robert Graves (*D2* 162). The question as to whether Sassoon felt attracted to Owen, and whether any romantic feelings were reciprocated, will remain a matter of speculation. However, given the fact that Sassoon suffered conflicted feelings about his homosexuality during the war, it may be possible that his inability to explain the nature of his friendship with Owen stemmed from the fact that sexual attraction played a part in their interactions with one another.

The issue of homosexuality aside, other similarities between Owen and Prewett suggest that it was the depth of affection that Sassoon had felt for Owen in life that made it difficult for him to come to terms with Owen's

death. Writing of Sassoon and Prewett's friendship in the introduction to *Selected Poems of Frank Prewett*, Bruce Meyer posits that Prewett acted as a 'surrogate for Wilfred Owen, someone who would act the role of the poet-student to Sassoon's self-acknowledged mentorship' (6). We can thus understand Sassoon and Prewett's friendship as being a means by which Sassoon sought to replicate the meaningful friendship that he had enjoyed with Owen while at Craiglockhart. While at Lennel, Sassoon and Prewett bonded over their shared love of poetry and Sassoon acted as Prewett's mentor, just as he had done almost a year earlier with Owen. In his 2005 biography of Sassoon, John Stuart-Roberts is also struck by the similarities between Sassoon's relationship with Owen and Prewett. He states that 'This encounter might have been a re-run of the Owen and Sassoon meeting at Craiglockhart' but goes on to identify that 'the genius of Owen and the burning passion of a vocation were not present' (130). Thus, we can infer that Sassoon had perhaps yearned to recreate his personally and creatively fulfilling relationship with Owen by casting Prewett in the mould of a proto-Owen.

Sassoon's continued support of Prewett in the post-war years, in which he offered Prewett both financial support and introductions to members of his literary circle, can interpreted as being a means by which Sassoon diverted his thoughts away from the contemplation of Owen's death. Sassoon's actions in the years following the war's end make it patently clear that memories of Owen continued to be present in his mind. Sam Behrman, a friend of Sassoon's during his time in New York in early 1920, recalled that '[Sassoon's] love for Edmund Blunden and Wilfred Owen . . . – was passionate. . . . He read their works aloud to me; he talked for hours about their distilled virtues' (qtd. in Wilson, *Journey* 86). Sassoon also maintained a friendship with Owen's younger brother, Harold, to whom he gave financial help in his efforts to become a painter. This is poignant evidence indeed of Sassoon's enduring affection for Owen. Writing in his diary on 21 November 1921, Sassoon described his desire to offer financial help to Harold and

added the parenthetical note: '(I keep thinking about Wilfred)' (*D2* 89). Here, the fact that Sassoon acknowledges his on-going thoughts of Owen in brackets is intriguing in suggesting Sassoon's reluctance to engage too deeply in contemplation of a friend whose loss perhaps still moved him greatly. On 25 September 1922, Sassoon wrote in his diary of 'memories which cannot be banished,' which included 'an afternoon in August 1918 . . . with Wilfred Owen—the last time I saw him' (*D2* 255). Here, once again, is confirmation of the fact that Owen remained prominent in Sassoon's thoughts: the word 'banished' suggests that Sassoon's conscious attempts to not think about Owen proved unsuccessful in the years after his friend's death.

Having examined Craiglockhart as the locus of Sassoon's troubling wartime memories, we must turn to contemplate the greatest irony to spring from Sassoon's time at the hospital. It is supremely ironic that, while at Craiglockhart, Sassoon was given a means by which to process and resolve his troubling experiences. This came in the form of Rivers's method of autognosis, which encouraged patients to engage in the examination of their experiences in order to gain greater self-knowledge. Many critics have identified the legacy of Rivers's treatment method in Sassoon's creative work. In 'Neurasthenia and the Cure of Literature', for example, John Woodrow Presley, argues that the Sassoon's *George Sherston Trilogy* is the literary embodiment of 'the W. H. R. Rivers "talking cure" [which was then] followed by the act of recording it in fiction' (310). Still more critics have identified the ways in which Sassoon's implementation of Rivers's method in his creative work is problematic. In 'Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties', Elaine Showalter identifies that, in writing the *George Sherston Trilogy*, Sassoon 'seemed to be continuing the process of autognosis in which he had been trained by Rivers, conducting a kind of self-psychoanalysis the object of which was to justify his life as a man' (67-68). The result, she says, is that Sherston 'is a simplified and macho version of what Sassoon called his 'outdoor self", not a poet, but rather the manly

participant in hunting and combat' (68). Adrian Caesar also identifies the problematic simplification that lies at the heart of the *George Sherston Trilogy*, confirming that Sherston is a 'simplified version of Sassoon' and that, in the narrative, 'Sassoon is re-writing himself. All the passion, the heights and depths of emotion are erased . . . to be replaced by an urbane and ultimately very conservative "understanding"' (103; 104). Max Egremont, author of the 2005 biography of Sassoon, further confirms the fact that Sassoon retreated into his earlier life as a means 'to escape a tormenting present' and, in doing so, 'created, in parallel with an autobiography, a utopia . . . [in which Sassoon] seals up this beautiful world, as he seals up parts of his true self' (294). Egremont's image of Sassoon walling up aspects of his personality and experiences is particularly effective in making clear Sassoon's reluctance to engage with troubling aspects of his experience and to seek solace in an ameliorated version of reality.

The aforementioned critics are unanimous in identifying the problems at the core of Sassoon's autobiographical project. For Caesar and Egremont, Sassoon's post-war writing reveals a desire to re-mould himself in a form in which the complexities of his character are eradicated, while Showalter's use of the word 'seemed' when describing Sassoon's use of autognosis infers doubt as to whether he did indeed use the method in his post-war life. Robert Hemmings comes closest to the truth in *Modern Nostalgia: Siegfried Sassoon, Trauma and the Second World War*. Here, he identifies a key problem with Sassoon's use of autognosis. Here, he writes that Sassoon's 'version of autognosis . . . was never as rigorous and disciplined as Rivers might have encouraged' and suggests that Sassoon's desire to keep up with literary mores was just as vital as 'any systematic psychoanalytic self-scrutiny' (112). However, recourse to Sassoon's diary of 1921 makes it clear that the problem with Sassoon's use of autognosis went deeper than his applying the method with a lack of rigour. Instead, a crucial misunderstanding appears to have taken place *vis-à-vis* Sassoon's understanding of autognosis itself.

In his diary entry dated 3 March 1921, Sassoon includes lines from a poem titled 'Autognosis'. The most telling of these are those that run: 'To know myself–this fragment of to-day– / To pluck the unconscious causes of unrest / From self-deceiving nature' (47). Sassoon's description of himself as being a 'fragment' makes clear that a failure of re-education has taken place, with Sassoon viewing himself not as a coherent whole but as a being in disunity. Further, his reference to 'self-deceiving nature' suggests an awareness that he had the tendency to be dishonest with himself, thus wilfully turning away from the truth of certain situations. Sassoon goes on to describe his understanding of autognosis, stating that:

> What it amounts to is this: that I must behave naturally, keeping one side of my mind aloof, a watchful critic. One part of me (mostly the inherited and primitive part) is the played on the stage. But I must also be the audience, and not an indulgent one either. I must be both action and audience; "produced" by environment. The play is unrehearsed, the lines are unwritten; a mere mixture of patter and improvisation, but every little bit of "business" is significant. (47)

The image of dissociation described in these lines is striking. Here, Sassoon is divided both in mind and in behaviour, a part of him always observing his thoughts and actions. It is notable that his description of autognosis is couched in the language of artifice rather than of unity: his life is conducted as if on stage. The goal of autognosis, the gaining of self-knowledge, is thus doomed to failure thanks to Sassoon's misunderstanding. By engaging in self-examination in which aspects of his character remain particulate, he will never succeed in creating a unified sense of self in which aspects of his identity are brought into harmony. Given his tendency towards 'self-deceiving', as identified earlier in the diary entry, Sassoon's misunderstanding of autognosis can be seen as serving a protective function in allowing him to continue to avoid the sort of self-examination that might prove distressing, despite the fact that engaging in this process would be beneficial to him in the long term.

We will never know what caused the failure of autognosis that so marred Sassoon's post-war life. His failure to understand Rivers's method may have

been a genuine one; however, as argued earlier, the multiple strains that Sassoon was under while at Craiglockhart may also have contributed to this failure. The guilt that accompanied the failure of his protest, coupled with the fragile state of his mental health at the time and conflicted feelings about his sexuality were psychological strains that converged at Craiglockhart, thus putting Sassoon under increased strain and perhaps rendering him unwilling to engage deeply with his troubling emotions as Rivers intended. Like a player upon the stage, he may have focused his attention on examining certain aspects of his experience, such as the impulsivity of his protest, while ignoring others, thus preventing a reunification of identity from taking place. His description of autognosis in his 1921 diary certainly suggests that something along these lines had occurred, while also suggesting that Sassoon was unaware of how problematic his understanding of autognosis would prove to his efforts to move forward with his life.

Writing in 'Fateful Memories: Industrialized War and Traumatic Neuroses', Eric Leed describes the plight of the traumatised in language that is resonant indeed in Sassoon's case. He writes that:

> Many traumatized by twentieth-century wars speak of their problem as an inability to forget, as an uncomfortable consciousness of being possessed, 'haunted' by a past they cannot put behind them, and which continually intrudes into their present lives, waking and sleeping. (86)

Sassoon's failure of autognosis thus ensured that Sassoon, like others traumatised by war, was unable to find respite from his troubling experiences or to acquire the self-knowledge that would bring him peace. It is poignant indeed to note that Sassoon's inability to make peace with his past lasted until late in his life. The lasting impact of the failure of autognosis on Sassoon's post-war life can be discerned in the unpublished poem 'An Incident in Literary History', which was written in 1950 when Sassoon was 64 (Appendix B.1). Jean Moorcroft-Wilson includes the poem in *Siegfried Sassoon: Journey from the Trenches*, in which she identifies that Sassoon

continued to be plagued by thoughts of Owen and reads the poem as evidence of Sassoon's misery at this stage of his life (370).

The poem's title is immediately striking in both acknowledging the significance of his meeting with Owen and condemning Sassoon's literary status to the distant past. The statement 'Owen's dead' (2) is notable for its brevity, this abrupt statement once again alluding to Sassoon's lasting inability to come to terms with his friend's death. Sassoon can state the fact that Owen is dead but denies himself further reflection by end-stopping the line. A sense of stasis tellingly intrudes in the poem's fifth line, in which Sassoon's statement that he has enjoyed a lifetime of being a poet is tempered by his use of a semi-colon. 'Yes; his career continued' (5), the speaker reflects, Sassoon's use of caesura suggesting his own reservations about this fact. Taken together with the title's reference to 'Literary History', and the first line's assertion that 'Sassoon and Owen . . . found their niche' in the war, this statement becomes a painful acknowledgement on Sassoon's part of the fact that his subsequent career failed to reach the heights of his wartime work.

The concluding three lines of the octet serve as a further indication of Sassoon's melancholy thoughts: 'His state of mind has made him wonder whether / Sassoon's continuance was appropriate… / Should not these soldier poets have died together?' (6-8). This moment of reflection emphasises Sassoon's profound unhappiness in the present as he questions the point of his surviving the war, with the trailing ellipses suggesting his reluctance to contemplate his post-war life. Sassoon's description of himself and Owen as being 'soldier poets' makes further clear his judgement that his later work has been of little consequence, while also being poignant in defining his identity in relation to a war that had ended 32 years earlier.

Sassoon's melancholy rumination on his literary career continues in the sestet. Here, he vents his creative frustrations by stating that he has 'done his level best to supplement / The scraps that opportunely earned him fame'

(10-11). This statement not only makes clear Sassoon's judgement that his post-war work was of a lower standard than his wartime poetry, he is also disparaging about his abilities as a poet in general: even his successful wartime poems were mere 'scraps'. The reference to 'cold chronicles' (12) reinforces once again his conviction that his most accomplished work is far behind him: his best poems belong to a different time that is 'cold' in death rather than vital and living. Furthermore, Sassoon's description of himself as being a 'ghost' (13) is startling. Here, he becomes the living embodiment of the aforementioned quote from Eric Leed: Sassoon has become a ghost of his former self and haunts his wartime poetry, having not found creative 'life' in the years after the conflict's end through his failure to make peace with his past. Sassoon's conclusion on the matter is a grim one in which he argues that his poetic voice should have found 'Silence' (14) through his death in the war and that he should have 'forever slept' (14) in France. The poem serves as sobering proof of the fact that, even late in life, Sassoon had failed to move on from his wartime experiences. Owen's death remains a painful memory and Sassoon's divided personality remains unresolved, as is made clear through the striking image of Sassoon being haunted by a former self, now dead, who calls to mind a spirit in purgatory in search of resolution.

Later in the 1950s, Sassoon found a solution to his unhappy post-war existence in the form of the absolution offered by religious conversion. In 1957, Sassoon became a member of the Roman Catholic church, the faith in which he remained until his death in 1967. Max Egremont explicitly links Sassoon's conversion with the search for an idealised reality, or 'utopia', that had dominated his life after the First World War and concludes that Sassoon's quest was finally actualised by his conversion to Catholicism (*Siegfried Sassoon* 524). Robert Hemmings, too, identifies a parallel between Sassoon's post-war quest and his religious conversion in later life, stating that Rivers's method was one whose aim was quasi-spiritual, in 'affording a framework that signals the possibility of complete knowledge beyond

traumatic experience' (*Modern Nostalgia* 121-2). Having found no respite in autognosis, therefore, Sassoon thus turned to the transcendence promised by religious faith.

In the conclusion of *Modern Nostalgia*, Robert Hemmings argues that the Second World War 'finally undermined' Sassoon's attempts to make sense of his earlier life, while his on-going 'need for meaning' drove him towards spirituality and his eventual conversion to Roman Catholicism (149). However, Hemmings does not configure his evaluation in relation to the failure of autognosis that Sassoon's conversion certainly countered. While it is certainly correct that the Second World War proved disastrous to Sassoon's quest for resolution, the war arguably proved shattering to Sassoon because it made patently clear the fact that his version of autognosis had become untenable as he remained mired in the emotional fallout of the earlier war. In concluding his study of Sassoon, Hemmings configures Sassoon's conversion as a 'nostalgic gesture' through which Sassoon found comfort by escaping 'the upheaval of the early modern world' (149). However, it was not the external world that proved so troubling for Sassoon: it was rather the internal world that proved enduringly problematic. Sassoon's conversion to Catholicism can thus be interpreted as being a final failure of autognosis. Religious conversion provided Sassoon with the transcendence of suffering that he had long sought, while the need for autognosis was removed as he was absolved by a higher power: God.

In this chapter's discussion of the significance of Craiglockhart War Hospital in the life of Siegfried Sassoon, the positive aspects of Sassoon's time at the hospital have been examined in detail. Not only did his time at Craiglockhart provide Sassoon with the opportunity to devote himself to his creative endeavours; he was also brought into contact with two men who would exert a lasting influence on his life. Sassoon's doctor, W.H.R. Rivers, encouraged Sassoon to move towards greater self-knowledge and maturity through autognosis, while Sassoon's contact with Wilfred Owen was both

creatively fulfilling and the basis of a close friendship. This chapter has also explored the troubling legacy of Craiglockhart in Sassoon's life by suggesting that Sassoon's time at the hospital was the locus of his troubling wartime memories. In arguing that Sassoon's failure to move on from his wartime experiences was due to a failure of autognosis, this chapter offers a new perspective by which Sassoon's troubled post-war life can be understood. In the following chapter, readers will be introduced to another patient of Craiglockhart, George Henry Bonner, whose literary connections to the hospital have only recently been rediscovered.

8. George Henry Bonner: A New Voice of Craiglockhart's Literary Culture

I will perish as the rest have,
I shall die unknown to fame;
But their foibles e'en the best have,
So I scribble all the same.
– George Henry Bonner,'Confession'.[1]

This thesis will conclude by introducing readers to George Henry Bonner who, during his time at Craiglockhart War Hospital, was a keen participant in the hospital's literary culture. During his time at Craiglockhart, between 30 November 1917 and 5 March 1918, Bonner served as the editor of *The Hydra* and published several of his own poems in the magazine. Bonner's connection to Craiglockhart has only recently been re-established, thanks to the research of John Garth. This chapter will begin by relating the remarkable story of the rediscovery of Bonner's connection to Craiglockhart and will thereafter proceed by examining Bonner's time at the hospital in detail. This will be complemented by study of a selection of Bonner's manuscript poems, which are here the subject of literary study for the first time. Bonner's participation in Craiglockhart's literary culture and his manuscript verse will be examined in relation to the central focus of this thesis, as they serve as further evidence of the tension between the repression and articulation of war experience that was so common among sufferers of neurasthenia.

The discussion of George Henry Bonner and his creative work, as carried out in this chapter, is only possible thanks to the determined research carried out by John Garth, an independent writer and researcher. Garth published an account of his rediscovery of Bonner and his connection to Craiglockhart in *The Wilfred Owen Association Journal*'s second issue of 2014. There, Garth modestly described his discovery as being only the result of a 'marvellous coincidence' (9).

Garth's rediscovery of Bonner was indeed a 'marvellous coincidence', due to the fact that Garth was, at the time, not in pursuit of Bonner at all. Rather, he was conducting research into the experiences of J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*, during the First World War. Garth was particularly interested in learning more about Tolkien's early writings and, as a result, had dedicated himself to researching Tolkien's school days. It was during this stage of his research that Garth discovered a reference to Bonner in a letter dating from 1913. The letter had been sent to Tolkien by one of his school friends and, in it, the name George Bonner was mentioned in relation to his potential membership of the Tea Club and Barrovian Society (TCBS), a literary club that Tolkien founded while he was still at school. The 'TCBSites', as they called themselves, were of particular interest to Garth. Following the war's outbreak, the 'TCBSites' had been the first to read Tolkien's early writings about Middle-earth, the fictional landscape that would later feature as the setting for *The Lord of the Rings* (10). Intrigued by the 1913 letter's reference to Bonner, Garth continued his investigations and discovered that Bonner had been treated at Craiglockhart during the First World War. On learning that Bonner had pursued a career in journalism after the conflict, Garth continued his investigations, positing that 'if anyone was likely to leave a first-hand record of youth, including more about Tolkien's circle, surely it would be a professional writer' (10). During the course of his research, Garth uncovered key biographical information about Bonner: he had gone up to Oxford in 1914, enlisted in Kitchener's Army shortly after and had been invalided back to Britain in 1916. Garth also learned that, after the war, Bonner completed his studies in Classics at Magdalen College, graduating in 1920 and thereafter going on to pursue a career in journalism. It was at this point that the trail turned cold and Garth abandoned his search as he 'could find no journalism by him later than 1928, no trace of his fate, and no clue as to family' (10).

Thoughts of Bonner continued to linger in Garth's mind years later. In 2003, Garth published *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-*

earth, the book that he had been researching when he first discovered Bonner. Even after concluding his research, however, Garth remained preoccupied by thoughts of Bonner. In 2009, it was thanks to a lucky coincidence that Garth's search for Bonner came to fruition. At this time, Garth made a passing remark to a colleague at Oxford about his interest in finding out more about the elusive George Bonner. The response? His work colleague amazed Garth by replying that he knew of a man named Austin Bonner who, remarkably, lived only minutes from Garth's flat in Oxford (10-11). On paying a visit to Austin Bonner, Garth learned that he was George Bonner's only son and was further delighted to learn that Austin had in his possession a large collection of his father's personal papers. These papers not only documented George Bonner's creative endeavours over a number of years, they also contained the February and March 1918 issues of Craiglockhart War Hospital's magazine, *The Hydra*, which had long been presumed lost to history. Years later, in 2013, Austin Bonner made arrangements for his father's papers to be bequeathed to his father's alma mater, Magdalen College. He also generously donated original copies of the February and March issues of *The Hydra* to the War Poets Collection at Craiglockhart, the small museum housed in the hospital's former building, which is now part of Napier University's Business School.

The following discussion of George Bonner's creative work is only possible thanks to the determined efforts of John Garth, to whom I am deeply indebted. I am also deeply indebted to Ben Taylor, the archivist at the McFarlane Library at Magdalen College, Oxford. Not only has he made me most warmly welcome to the college on various research trips, but he has worked tirelessly to catalogue Bonner's papers in order that Bonner's literary legacy might be preserved for the future.

George Henry Bonner was born on 26 May 1895 and completed his education at King Edward's School in Birmingham. He enrolled at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1914 but left after volunteering for active service soon after the declaration of war. In June 1915, Bonner was transferred from the

South Staffordshire regiment into the Royal Field Artillery, with whom he served until he was sent home in November 1916. The reason why Bonner was invalided back to Britain remains unknown, but it is possible that neurasthenia was the cause. It was not until 30 November 1917 that Bonner was admitted to Craiglockhart, where he remained until 5 March 1918. On being discharged from the hospital, Bonner was deemed unfit for further military duties and was discharged from the army on the grounds of being medically unfit (Taylor *magd.oc.ac.uk*).

While being treated at Craiglockhart, Bonner appears to have adjusted well to hospital life and to have been a busy member of the hospital's literary community. He served as the editor of *The Hydra* for a number of issues, contributed several of his poems to the magazine and became a member of the recently founded Literary Society. His name appears for the first time in *The Hydra*'s January 1918 issue, where 'Mr Bonner' is listed as the magazine's editor (14). He is also mentioned by name in the editorial of the May 1918 issue, in which his departure from the hospital is noted. Here, the new editor gives his thanks to the recently-departed Bonner, stating that 'I must express my thanks to the late editor for his kindness to me, and for the thorough way in which he handed everything over to me' (1). Later in the issue, Bonner is mentioned once again in the 'Valete' section, in which departing officers' names are listed and their contribution to hospital life described. The entry states:

> *March* 14.—Lieut. G. H. BONNER. The editor of our Magazine. It is impossible to estimate the amount of work done by him, but it is sufficient to say that, by dint of great persuasive power and much "midnight oil," the Magazine always appeared to date. The circulation steadily increased under his able management. Perhaps you can send an article or two, Bonner? We should be pleased!!! (3)

Based on this evidence, we can conclude that Bonner was a dedicated, thorough and hard-working editor whose efforts were much appreciated. The new editor's reference to the increased readership of the magazine that coincided with Bonner's period of editorial control further makes clear the

fact that Bonner's hard work on *The Hydra* was also appreciated by his readership.

Bonner's keen engagement with the literary life of the hospital further suggests that he keenly embraced Craiglockhart's therapeutic ethos, whose emphasis was on re-connecting patients with their previous interests and engaging them in purposeful work. Bonner's dedicated work on *The Hydra* serves as evidence of his engagement with ergotherapy, in demonstrating his desire both to reconnect himself to the literary activities of his pre-war life, while also suggesting that his time at the hospital was a fruitful means of nurturing his literary aspirations for the future.

In addition to editing *The Hydra* during his time at Craiglockhart, Bonner contributed seven poems to the magazine between January and March 1918. In keeping with the magazine's traditions, he did not publish these works under his own name. One, 'Golden Acre: An Allegory' (March 1918) was attributed to 'H' and three poems, 'Triolet', 'A Song of Ordnance' and 'The Passing of the Turk' (January 1918), were attributed to 'H.M.P.'. A further three works, 'Beads', 'Invocation' and 'At Dusk' (January, February and March 1918, respectively), were attributed to 'G.A.'. Bonner was certainly a prolific contributor! Yet we can also detect a knowing deception on his part, as evidenced by his use of different initials when publishing his poems. By publishing his poems and attributing them to various initials, Bonner manipulated the vision of reality presented in *The Hydra* by giving the impression that it had received more contributions than it had in actuality.

Bonner's use of different initials by which to identify his poetic contributions to *The Hydra* appears also to have served his creative ends in enabling him to take on different creative personas within these works. There is a marked difference in tone, for example, between the poems that Bonner published under the initials 'H' and 'H.M.P.' in comparison with those published under the initials 'G.A.', with those credited to 'G.A.' being more literary in style. Of the works published as 'H' and 'H.M.P.', 'Golden

Acre: An Allegory' and 'Triolet' are of interest as they describe hospital life (Appendix C.1; Appendix C.2).

'Golden Acre: An Allegory' is an amusing little poem where the poet puns on the name of the North Edinburgh district Golden Acre, describing it as being a desirable destination to visit as a result of it being so moneyed that 'it rains in sapphires and diamonds there' (4).[2] However, the speaker reveals that he has never succeeded in reaching Golden Acre due to the fact that, while walking down Princes Street, 'Some princess always asks me to take her / To the House of Pictures to drink some tea' (15-16). The hospital's patients would no doubt have laughed on reading Bonner's poem. Perhaps they, too, had spent a lot of money taking young girls out to tea themselves and would have liked to visit an area of the city where 'diamonds and sapphires' rained from the sky!

The poem 'Triolet' would no doubt also have amused the hospital's patients by alluding to the flirtations that may have gone on between some patients of the hospital and the nurses and V.A.D.s.[3] In the poem, the speaker confesses his mortification at having sent his valentine to the wrong recipient and he voices his distress that what he considers to have been 'an excellent verse / Rhyming "Mr" with "kissed her"' (6) was given to 'Nurse' instead of to 'Sister' (7; 8). We will never know the identities of the women referred to in Bonner's verse, but we can deduce, from the speaker's horror at his mistake, that the nurse in question was perhaps not the sort of woman who would appreciate romantic advances being made by her patients.

The poems published by Bonner and attributed to 'G.A.' are more literary in tone. They are also interesting as they provide the reader with clues as to the true nature of Bonner's mental state, with both 'Beads' and 'At Dusk' being of interest in this respect. 'Beads' is a short love poem in which Bonner deploys the metaphor of beads being strung together to describe the flattering speech of the speaker to his beloved (Appendix C.3).[4] 'Our speech is like a silver tray / Where beads for words are scattered' (1-2), the poem opens, establishing the notion from the outset that his communication

with his lover is carefully mediated. The poem ends with the speaker confirming that he himself engages in such an activity, in choosing the best words with which to flatter his lover. 'And so by subtle choice of these / Into gay songs I string them' (9-10), the speaker reveals, before the poem closes with him bestowing the gift of the poem, a carefully constructed work of articulation, at the 'feet' of his lover (11). The poem's description of controlled speech, in which the speaker carefully chooses his words in order to achieve a particular effect, is telling when considered in terms of Craiglockhart's therapy, whose emphasis was on articulation. Here, 'Beads' can be read as evidence of the fact that Bonner was no stranger to controlled communication. Might Bonner's own creative expression within the magazine have been likewise mediated?

Such a possibility is suggested by the content of the short poem 'At Dusk' (Appendix C.4).[5] Here, the speaker describes lying 'Between sleeping and waking' (2) and describes the thought that comes into his head at this moment as being a 'moth' (5). As a result of being 'bright green' (5), it immediately attracts the speaker's attention. However, as the speaker is 'too tired / To get . . . [his] net' (5-6), the moth disappears 'Into the shadows' (9). The poem is interesting for various reasons when read in light of Bonner's time at Craiglockhart. The fact that the speaker is lying 'Between sleeping and waking' (2) suggests an inability to sleep, perhaps resulting from the fear of nightmares and night terrors so common among sufferers of neurasthenia. The colour of the moth is further interesting as a result of its 'bright green' (5) colour. The speaker's interest is piqued by the moth's appearance, thus indicating an interesting thought, yet he is too apathetic to pursue it, this suggesting his reluctance to actively engage with life. We might also note the negative connotations of the colour green, with its association with sickness and decay. Here, we can detect a tension between repression and articulation, when Bonner's status as a neurasthenia patient is considered: when negative thoughts come to mind, he would rather ignore them rather than pursue them. As a result, the

thought, configured as a moth, is left to flit away without being engaged with while the speaker remains in a passive state.

Out of all the poems that Bonner published in *The Hydra*, 'Invocation' provides readers with the most compelling evidence that Bonner's mental state was poor while he was being treated at Craiglockhart (Appendix C.5).[6] The poem was published in the February 1918 issue of *The Hydra* and its content is immediately striking. Here, the poem's speaker not only makes explicit reference to the myth of Antaeus and Hercules, used by Brock to illustrate his therapeutic method, but the words of the speaker make clear both his anguish and desire for relief from his current suffering. This suggests Bonner's own hopes that Craiglockhart's therapies would offer him a successful cure.

The first subject of the poem to whom a prayer is offered is Mother Earth, the mother of Antaeus, who is addressed as 'Mother' in the poem's opening line. In the myth of Antaeus and Hercules, Antaeus derived his power from his connection with his mother, the earth. Here, she is addressed by the collective voice of the poem, which can be read as representing the patients of Craiglockhart. The content of the poem makes clear the fact that the collective speakers of the poem turn to her for consolation, hoping that she will help them to regain their strength in the present. The poem explicitly references traumatic experience through the speakers' admission to being haunted in the present. As a result, they turn to Mother Earth, being 'Foredone with fear' as they 'stagger through the night' (2). This description makes clear the fact that a past encounter with terrible experiences has left the speakers haunted in the present and unable to sleep. The speakers are terrified and exhausted as a result of the fact that 'shapes of doom pursue us, [and] ghostly arms / Reach out to grasp our spent and shivering souls' (4-5). The words 'doom' and 'ghostly' provide a link to the moment of fear referred to in line two that can be read as an explicit reference to the war. Having faced death and horror on active service, the speakers of the poem are haunted by traumatic memories from

which they cannot escape. The heavy alliteration of ‘desperate with dread’ (6) further emphasises the burden that the speakers of the poem must bear. They are cowed by their traumatic memories and are made frantic in the present by memories that oppress them with feelings of extreme anxiety and horror. The opening lines of the poem are potent when examined in relation to Craiglockhart’s therapeutic emphasis on the articulation of experience. Here, Bonner’s words are a powerful act of articulation, in which he not only voices his yearning desire for relief from his symptoms but also describes in frank terms the emotional torment that he now endures.

Despite the depth of despair articulated in the opening lines of the poem, there is great hope in ‘Invocation’. This comes in the form of Craiglockhart’s cure, which is here alluded to in the poem’s descriptive detail. Through ergotherapy, the hospital’s patients hope to reconnect meaningfully with their past, present and future and thereby are ‘lulled by the peace of eternal things’ (8) through recognising their intimate connection to the eternal force of time. The hospital’s insistence that patients re-engage with their wider environment is also described in the reference to ‘The woods and fields and immemorial hills’ (9) that offer consolation and the possibility of re-engagement with the wider world. Such activities are a balm for the troubled souls of the hospital’s patients, as is suggested by the image of drinking in line ten: engaging with the wider environment has medicinal powers in bringing ‘quietude’ and helping patients to ‘fear no more’ (10). These descriptions of the hospital’s cure being a balm for suffering are a moving testimony to the hospital’s positive impact on the psychic health of its patients. Bonner’s vision of the world, as described in these lines, is free of terror and rich with the promises of restoration, thus suggesting the curative benefits that Bonner himself enjoyed while being treated at the hospital.

The speakers then address Antaeus, ‘Son of the great All-mother’ (12), ‘God of renewing by the earth renewed’ (17). He is the object of prayer because he serves as proof that reconnecting with the earth brings renewed strength; something that the speakers of the poem dearly wish for. The

speakers urge him to ‘drive […] / From our sick souls all deathly whisperings’ (23) and ‘Give us again the dream O shining one, / The dream that we have lost’ (24-25), words that are poignant indeed in describing the hopelessness felt by the poem’s speakers. They are sick at heart: haunted by their traumatic memories and longing for their hope to be restored. Despite being unequivocal about the torments that they currently endure, neurasthenia is configured as being a literal ‘hell’ (30), the gloom of present experience is once again countered by the speakers’ faith in the hospital’s cure.

‘Invocation’ concludes with a positive image as the speakers exhort Antaeus to lead them into the ‘far sunrise’ and ‘the Golden City of our Dreams’ (32). The fact that the city is ‘Golden’ emphasises how deeply recovery is desired by the speakers: it is as valuable as gold. The colour suggests a bright beacon of hope that shines in the speakers’ current darkness, imbuing them with faith in a brighter future.

‘Invocation’ is a powerful document of the shared experience of Craiglockhart’s patients, who were bound together by both their troubling symptoms and their desire for a successful recovery. In Bonner’s case, the poem can be read as evidence of his own emotional experiences, as the poem serves as an articulation of both the devastating symptoms with which he had to contend and his hopes that Craiglockhart would cure him. While the poem marks a positive act of articulation in that Bonner can describe his troubled emotional state, his use of the collective voice can be read as indicating his reluctance to engage fully with his own feelings about his breakdown and recovery. By writing the poem in the collective voice, Bonner succeeds in distancing himself from his own distress by speaking through the voice of general experience, an act which simultaneously offers great consolation by reassuring him that he is not alone.

Recourse to Bonner’s manuscript verse at this point makes it possible to confirm the fact that Bonner was a man very much troubled by his wartime experiences. Three poems that pre-date Bonner’s time at Craiglockhart

which are of interest are ‘Ah Me!’, ‘Vivamus Mea Lesbia’ and ‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’. Based on the evidence of these three works, we can conclude that Bonner was a man whose symptoms were severe and long-lasting, which is something that would have posed a particular challenge to Craiglockhart’s doctors. Study of Bonner’s manuscript verse dating from the months prior to his admission to Craiglockhart is of further value, as it confirms that Bonner used poetry as a means of engaging with his emotional experiences even before arriving at the hospital, thus suggesting that he was a man poised to benefit indeed when brought into contact with Craiglockhart’s therapeutic emphasis on the articulation of experience.

The first manuscript poem that is relevant to this discussion of Bonner’s private reflections on the war is ‘Ah Me!’, dated 10 July 1917.[7] The poem is worthy of discussion in this chapter as the poem’s content makes clear the fact that wartime experience exerted a negative impact on Bonner’s creativity (Appendix C.6). The use of first person throughout, when considered alongside Bonner’s own status as a literary man, allows for a reading to be pursued in which the poem’s content is read as a document of Bonner’s own experience.

In the first stanza, the speaker admits that the war has affected him negatively, due to the fact that it has stifled his creativity:

> I used to know the Muse
> She sang whate’er I willed her,
> But now it is no use
> For the army it has killed her. (1-4)

These lines emphasise that the speaker was formerly blessed with creative inspiration, as is expressed in the speaker’s statement that ‘I used to know the Muse’ (1). His former interactions with the muse were also fruitful, as is suggested by the image of the Muse’s obedience: we are told that ‘She sang whate’er I willed her’ (2). In the present, however, all has changed. The speaker’s creative inspiration has not only deserted him, it is described as having died outright. ‘[T]he army it has killed her’ (4), the speaker states. Bonner’s word choice is powerful indeed. His military experiences have put

an end to his creativity, with the word ‘killed’ suggesting either that military life is creatively stultifying or that, in being taught to kill, he has murdered his own poetic sensibilities.

The final verse of the poem suggests another reason for the speaker’s inability to find creative inspiration. On first reading, the stanza can be read as being a reference to the negative impact of military life on the speaker’s mind, in cultural terms. He previously took pains to improve his mind ‘With culture’ (14) but has since discovered that this is unimportant in military life: all that is required of him is obedience to his new, intellectually dulled, existence. However, a second interpretation can be pursued that relates these lines to Bonner’s neurasthenia:

> I used to have a mind
> With culture I improved;
> In vain for now I find
> That the army has removed it. (13-16)

If read thus, the poem’s conclusion becomes a powerful statement of the speaker’s acute distress at his current mental state. Not only is he alienated from the creative inspiration that previously gave him much joy, as indicated in the first stanza, but, due to the fact that his military experience has rendered him neurasthenic, his mind is now figuratively missing as a result of his traumatised state. The poem’s title ‘Ah Me!’ can thus be read as not only referring to Bonner’s lack of creative facility but as a statement of his despair at having broken down.

The poem ‘Vivamus Mea Lesbia’, dated 9 September 1917, can be read as evidence of the fact that, months after the composition of ‘Ah Me!’, Bonner remained troubled by his wartime experiences.[8] In the poem, a collective voice comprised of unidentified speakers admit the fact that they possess a secret knowledge that has made them aware of the transience of life (Appendix C.7). The statement made in lines seven and eight is the key to a reading of the poem in which military experience is described. Here, the collective voice of the poem admits that ‘For us there is ever the secret voice, / “Happy to-day; and to-morrow — dead”’ (7-8). This revelation,

made in the closing lines of the first stanza, enables the reader to better appreciate the sentiments expressed earlier in the stanza. If we understand the collective voice of the poem as being comprised of soldiers whose experiences have made them aware of the fragility of life, we can understand that their appreciation of nature stems from their newly-found perspective on life. They can watch in delight as 'The summer swallows […] flash and skim / With never a thought for the winter's cold' (1-2), able to relish the joys of the moment as a result of their heightened awareness that 'night's behind them and night ahead' (6). Here, 'night' is a reference to the inevitability of death, a reality with which the soldiers are intimately acquainted. While the 'swallows' (1) and 'larks' (3) live in the moment at the height of summer, the soldiers know that winter, and death, must come; its absolute nature emphasised by the dash that separates the word '—dead' (8) from the rest of the first stanza.

In the second stanza, the soldiers' secret knowledge is one that enables them to appreciate the fleeting joys of life. They 'Will live in the moment, pluck the flower' (14) and 'catch the gold of the fleeting hour' (16). While the poem's conclusion is positive in stating that the soldiers' awareness of death enables them to appreciate the transient joys of life more fully, the soldiers remain heavily burdened. Their secret knowledge of death is one that lingers with them in all moments of life as, even in life's most glorious moments, symbolised by 'summer' (1), they cannot escape their awareness of the omnipresence of death, which taints even their most pleasant experiences in the present.

'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle' is the most striking work to be found among Bonner's manuscript verse.[9] It is a vivid, lucidly realised poem that powerfully describes the breakdown of an officer under shell fire (Appendix C.8). The poem is dated 3 November 1917 and was written less than a month before Bonner arrived at Craiglockhart. The poem is a no-holds-barred act of articulation and it is supremely moving. Here, Bonner powerfully describes an officer's breakdown, emphasises the striking

difference between the officer's expectations of battle and its reality, and explores the intense feelings of shame that taunt the officer at the moment of his breakdown. The rich detail of the poem suggests that its creation was a purgative act for Bonner, who perhaps used the officer subject of the poem as a conduit by which to engage with his own feelings about having broken down. As the poem was a private work and never published, it serves as further evidence of previous conclusions drawn in this thesis; namely, that soldiers articulated themselves very differently in the public and private spheres. Based on the evidence of 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle', we can deduce that Bonner was acutely distressed by his wartime experiences and may have used verse as a vehicle by which to privately engage with his troubling emotions.

In 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle', Bonner skilfully manipulates the formal elements of his poem to achieve maximum impact. From the outset, his use of language is immediately striking in describing the officer's crouched posture, physical paralysis, and overwhelming fear. The first stanza reads:

> In a shell-hole
> He crouches,
> This officer,
> Unable to go forward.
> He is afraid. (1-5)

Here, Bonner uses both description and verse form to great effect. His sparse descriptions conjure a vision of the battlefield as being world in which soldiers react to events on an instinctive level, living only from moment to moment. The mental distress of the officer is suggested in this lack of detail: he is so overwhelmed by events that he can only apprehend the 'shell-hole' (1) in which he 'crouches' (2) and is incapable of processing any additional information. The predominance of short syllables further emphasises the officer's inability to take in what is happening around him, while his stasis is mocked by the additional feet of the fourth line. The statement that 'He is afraid' (5) is emphasised as a result of appearing in a single, end-stopped line, formally emphasising the fact that the officer has been consumed by an all-encompassing fear.

The stanzas that follow describe the officer's isolation as we learn that his 'men / Are either dead / Or have gone forward' (6-8). One other shares his horror, however, a man who 'Shattered and screaming / Prays to be shot' (12-13). Bonner's use of sibilance makes clear the horror of the scene, shocking the reader with its description of a soldier so distressed by his experiences that he longs for death. As for the officer, he remains frozen as a result of the fact that 'No power / Mortal or immortal / Can impel him' to move forwards (19-21). Thereafter, the fact of his breakdown is explicitly stated: 'He has reached that point / Where the mind / No longer controls the body' (23-24).

Bonner's description of the subject's condition at this point is an almost textbook description of the paralysis suffered by victims of shell shock and one that he may have experienced himself. This inability to move was something that subscribers to the psychological interpretation of breakdown in war termed 'substitution neurosis'. This occurred when soldiers lost the ability to control themselves while under extreme strain: their bodies reverted to the primal fight or flight response, rendering them incapable of action (Allan 365). The officer's paralysis in these lines is an embodiment of this response: unable to flee from an intolerable situation, his body reverts to the primal response of remaining immobile. As a result, the officer is unable to command his body into action and he is paralysed by his fear.

The officer's acute torment is further compounded by the thoughts that accompany his breakdown. At the same moment that he is rendered incapable of action, 'Thoughts of life / Come tumbling' into his head (28-29) and he is taunted by his earlier ideas about the war and 'how he had planned to die / Rushing with a laugh into the fight / Having tasted the joy of battle' (30-32). Here, the contrast between expectation and reality is starkly stated. The officer's expectations of battle, shaped by the propagandistic conception of soldiering as being the apotheosis of manliness, are ironically contrasted with reality. The officer's absolute horror at the realities of battlefield experience is made clear when he exclaims:

But this!
To slink down among the shadows
Slowly extinguished
Is intolerable. (33-36)

The word 'slink', with it is connotations of creeping, is in direct contrast to the officer's dream of 'Rushing' into battle (31), while 'extinguished' negates any notions of glory in obliterating all hope and leaving the officer in darkness.

It is interesting to note that the poem not only describes the officer's dejection at having been broken by his experiences: the poem also describes the feelings of shame that the officer feels as a result of breaking down. Here, 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle' articulates sentiments similar to those examined earlier in this thesis. In 'Negotiating the Road to Recovery: Poetry and *The Hydra*', the poems 'Waiting' by 'J.W.O'C.W.' and 'Stared At' by 'An Inmate' were examined in relation to Craiglockhart's therapeutic ethos. It was concluded that these works were an expression of the feelings of shame experienced by their creators in relation to their breakdowns. Identical sentiments are expressed in the twelfth stanza of 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle'. Here, the officer, unable to move from the shell-hole in which he is cowering, thinks about his life before the war, 'When the world was real /And not Hell' (44). However, rather being comforted by thoughts of his friends back in Britain, he believes that they will treat him differently after learning about his fate. 'Now they will despise him' (45), the officer thinks, 'And speak of him in whispers / As one who failed' (46-47). In 'Waiting' by J.W.O.'C.W. it was argued that the speaker's own negative feelings about his breakdown caused him to view the public as being hostile towards him. Here, too, we can discern similar sentiments at work: despite the fact the officer remains trapped in the moment of breakdown, he transfers his own feelings, in which he equates breakdown with a failure of courage and manliness, onto his friends. The repetition of 'Pity' (48; 49) reflects his horror that his friends might consider him to have failed by breaking down, while

his statement that their ‘Pity’ will be ‘not unmixed with contempt’ (49) further emphasises his expectation that his friends will look on him with scorn.

Considered together, these descriptions of neurasthenia sufferers anticipating being negatively reacted to suggests that sufferers often faced the additional burden of shame after breaking down. In ‘Stared At’, the negative reactions from those around him are so powerful that they make the speaker nervous: ‘No wonder that my nerves ain’t right’, he admits (11). In ‘Waiting’, the speaker feels that he is judged by those around him, who consider him weak. As a result, he considers himself to be ‘An object of scorn or pity / [With] nowhere a friend’ (11-12), believing that people will only detest him or feel sorry for him as a result of failing to live up to the soldierly ideal. The self-inflicted nature of the neurasthenic soldier’s torment is a common feature of all three works. In ‘Stared At’, the speaker believes that others are watching him with morbid curiosity and therefore feels distressed, in ‘Waiting’ the speaker is convinced that he is friendless due to the fact that others think him weak, and in ‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’, the speaker believes that his interactions with others will also be profoundly affected as a result of his condition. The great poignancy in all three works results from the fact that these negative feelings are exacerbated by the speakers’ belief that they have failed to conform to the soldierly ideal and are thus deserving of disdain. In ‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’ it is particularly distressing when the officer, in the thirteenth stanza, questions how his beloved will respond to his condition. ‘Will she too despise / Or understand?’ (52-53), the officer wonders, thinking that his lover will think of him differently on learning about his fate in battle.

‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’ lurches further into the horrific in its closing stanzas as, after being tormented by thoughts as to how his friends and lover will respond to him after breaking down, the speaker feels that the world itself has turned against him. Here, his perceived failure looms large in the form of an aeroplane that torments him, its engine personified as a voice that calls out ‘“Coward, coward!”’ (59). At this stage, the world has become

utterly hostile to the speaker and all he can do is weep: still trapped in the shell-hole, he 'cries like a child' (64). This description is powerful not only conveying his utter dejection and hopelessness; it also echoes other accounts of neurasthenia's power to render grown men helpless. One such account was written by Siegfried Sassoon in *Sherston's Progress*, where Sherston describes that it was a common occurrence to encounter patients at Craiglockhart who were 'crying like children' (32).

The poem concludes with a deeply unsettling final stanza in which the officer is killed. It is reproduced in its entirety below:

> The sound of a heavy shell
> Grinding through the zenith
> The end of misery.
> Death. (66-69)

Given the autobiographical nature of 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle', the final stanza is troubling indeed in describing that the shell represents 'The end of misery. / Death'. The poem's conclusion, in which death is merciful as a means of escaping the 'misery' of breakdown, is chilling and perhaps indicative of the extreme anguish that Bonner experienced before arriving at Craiglockhart.

Study of the above manuscript poems written in the months before Bonner's admission to Craiglockhart makes clear the fact that he was a man profoundly distressed by his wartime experiences. 'Ah Me!' suggests Bonner's distress at finding his creativity negatively impacted on by his war experience while also alluding to the war's negative impact on his psyche, while 'Vivamus Mea Lesbia' articulates the enduring emotional strain that he experienced after experiencing the war's realities first-hand. 'Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle' is the most striking of these works in vividly describing an officer's breakdown under fire and engaging with the numerous strains experienced by the speaker, who must not only endure breaking down but who is tormented by the shattering of his ideals about war and haunted by thoughts of being treated as a failure as a result of having broken down.

The dating of ‘Ah Me!’ to July 1917, four months before Bonner was admitted to Craiglockhart, indicates that Bonner’s symptoms were well-established by the time he reached the hospital, while the visceral content of ‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’ suggests the multiple strains that may have weighed upon Bonner’s psyche. Yet despite this, Bonner appears to have adapted well to life at the hospital, as evidenced by his editorship of *The Hydra* and the fact that he contributed multiple poems to the magazine’s pages. This involvement in the hospital’s literary activities makes clear his positive engagement with ergotherapy and the thanks accorded to him on leaving the hospital, as printed in the ‘Valete’ section, mentioned earlier, suggests the passion with which he dedicated himself to his recovery.

There are multiple clues, however, that suggest that all was not as it seemed. Though outwardly busy, as evidenced by his involvement with *The Hydra*, Bonner’s overall creativity dwindled, as is indicated by the largely fragmentary nature of the poems that make up his manuscripts of the time. It may be that his involvement with *The Hydra* kept him sufficiently occupied; however, the draft of an unfinished poem written at the time suggests that he may have been suffering from a greater malaise. The poem ‘I Once Knew a Girl’ is, on first glance, a light-hearted work in which Bonner’s life in Edinburgh is described in humorous detail (Appendix C.9).[10] Beginning with a first stanza in which the speaker reveals his dislike of a friend’s baby, and continuing with fragmentary notes describing his aunt falling in a river, the last four stanzas of ‘I Once Knew a Girl’ describe Craiglockhart life directly. In the third stanza, the speaker resists his doctor’s attempts to engage him in the hospital’s activities; in the fourth, he resists the advances of a woman that he meets in town; in the fifth, the speaker refuses to subscribe to *The Hydra*; and in the sixth, the speaker refuses to be discharged from the hospital, turns down the offer of leave and even refuses a pension as a result of his apathy.

In each stanza, the repeated refrain, which comprises variations of ‘Then I said do you mind if I don’t [*sic*]’ is one of polite negation that makes clear

Bonner's lack of inclination to participate. The third stanza is most interesting as it describes Craiglockhart's ethos of active recovery. Here, the speaker's doctor attempts to engage him in the hospital's active cure, such as by encouraging him to 'take a cold swim' (29), 'walk . . . to the Pentlands and back' (30), to 'go down to the farm' (31) or to 'read Homer a bit' (33). It is telling that the speaker is utterly uninterested, this being an indication of his poor mental state and reluctance to engage with others. These lines further suggest that Craiglockhart's patients may have felt overwhelmed by the hospital's ethos of active recovery, particularly while their symptoms were severe. The speaker of the poem might thus have much in common with the patients described in the 'Notes on the Staff of Craiglockhart War Hospital', who locked themselves into toilet stalls and hid under their bed covers as a means of avoiding early morning walks and other hospital activities (298).

Reference to a poem written weeks before Bonner was discharged from Craiglockhart makes clear the fact that the public face of productivity that Bonner projected through his work on *The Hydra* hid a darker reality. Though Bonner had embraced the hospital's ethos of active recovery and harboured great hopes that a cure would be possible, as was evidenced in the content of 'Invocation', his manuscript poem 'Sonnet' makes it clear that his troubling symptoms lingered.[11] The manuscript is dated 14 February 1918 and the poem describes a speaker saved by love (Appendix C.10).

'Sonnet' opens with the assertion 'Broke is the spell' (1), which suggests a speaker freed from some form of enchantment. The lines that follow make clear that the enchantment that has been broken was a curse. 'Back to their cavernous homes / Vanish the shapes that long have haunted me' (1-2), the speaker reveals, in a statement that refers to his former mental torment. Most striking about the poem is the description of the horrors that have haunted the speaker, which are described as 'shapes' (2) and 'all that crowd of gnomes' (3). When we consider the fact that Bonner was suffering from neurasthenia at the time of writing the poem these descriptions make

greater sense, as the ‘cavernous homes’, ‘shapes’, and ‘crowd of gnomes’ can now be understood as being references to the nightmarish memories of the neurasthenic soldier. Moreover, the speaker’s reference to ‘the portals of despair’ (4) suggests the depths of depression that may have accompanied Bonner’s symptoms. These descriptions, while emphasising the unsettling nature of the torments suffered by the speaker, also suggest a failure of articulation. His terrors remain ‘shapes’ because they have not been defined, while the ‘crowd of gnomes’ suggests unarticulated fears made nightmarish. Interesting too are the speaker’s references to ‘fear’ (3) and ‘sloth’ (3), which suggest that his memories retain their ability to cause distress while also acting as confirmation of the apathy suffered by patients suffering from neurasthenia, as alluded to in the repeated refrain of ‘I Once Knew a Girl’.

The speaker’s past torments are left behind in the remainder of the octet and sestet, in which the speaker expresses his delight at being released from his former anguish. ‘I am alive again’ (5), he rejoices, ‘God! I am free’ (7). Here, the speaker now feels confident of going ‘singing down the years’ (9) and ‘Pass[ing] laughing through the very gates of hell’ (8), having discovered the release and happiness so dearly sought in his earlier poem ‘Invocation’. The reason for the speaker’s joy, however, is love, rather than the success of his treatment at Craiglockhart. ‘‘[T]was you who broke the spell / Loving me so. Ah, sweet, shall I forget?’ (13-14), the speaker rhapsodises in the poem’s closing lines, as he praises the lover who has brought him comfort and relief.

Read in relation to Craiglockhart’s therapies, ‘Sonnet’ serves as evidence that Bonner’s treatment had not yet succeeded in relieving him of his troubling symptoms. The nightmarish descriptions of the terrors from which he suffered until falling in love makes it clear that his wartime experiences retained their ability to cause distress and that the symptoms of his neurasthenia endured. The speaker’s delight at having found relief from his symptoms through love is one that seems unkind to condemn; however, by

crediting his lover with easing his symptoms, Bonner prevents himself from further engaging with his past trauma. His lover has not, as the poem's opening lines makes clear, healed his mental anguish in any way: his traumatic memories have merely gone 'back to their cavernous homes' (1) within his psyche, rather than being eradicated. Should the love affair end, the positive spell cast by his lover would be broken, thus allowing his wartime memories to intrude once again into his psyche.

Brock himself identified the dangers of such behaviour, in which neurasthenic patients engaged in particular behaviours in order to avoid engagement with their symptoms. Writing in 'The Re-Education of the Adult: The Neurasthenic in War and Peace', he termed such behaviour 'drugging' (27) and described it in terms that were pertinent indeed in Bonner's case. Brock identifies that:

> When the neurasthenic . . . ceases to make headway against his environment–or rather, shall I say? to utilize his environment–he has to find a substitute for this feeling of *bienêtre* which is lost to him. And this he finds in some form of what may broadly be called a *drug*. . . .
>
> "Drugging" is a customary method whereby the comforts of life are obtained while the life-process itself is more or less at a standstill, if not at its ebb. (26-27)

Bonner could be the very man described in Brock's quotation. His treatment had entered into its third month and his symptoms lingered, as evidenced by the opening lines of 'Sonnet'. Love was the drug that Bonner chose to abuse in this case, it being a means by which he could distract himself from his on-going symptoms and, by doing so, find temporary relief. Brock's identification that it was patients whose 'life-process' was 'more or less at a standstill, if not at its ebb' (27) is poignant in suggesting that Bonner's mental state at the time of the poem's composition was likely very poor indeed.

Weeks later, Bonner's poor state of health was confirmed when he was discharged from Craiglockhart and classed as being medically unfit for further duties. On 5 March 1918, Bonner left the hospital. Bonner's case was not unusual, however, given the fact that little under half of Craiglockhart's

patients were deemed fit for a return to duty after their treatment. Despite the fact that Bonner was deemed unfit for further military duties, however, his treatment did achieve success when judged in terms of his ability to function successfully on returning to civilian life. On resuming his life as a civilian, Bonner continued to pursue his literary interests, just as he had done while a patient at Craiglockhart. The after-effects of his war experience continued to linger, however, as is suggested in his melancholy poem 'How Shall We Find You Joy?', a poem written in 1919 (Appendix C.11).[12]

In 'How Shall We Find You Joy?', the stanza's initial repeated refrain 'How shall we find you Joy?' is answered, in the negative, by the collective voice of soldiers. For example, in the first stanza, exhausted by the war and 'spent'(1), the soldier speakers are demoralized by the fact that lessons have not been learned from the conflict and, despite the fact that there is a 'new day / Hatred and death are still man's whole intent' (4). The soldiers have also been profoundly changed by their experiences; the horrors of battle have proved powerful enough to kill their capacity for joy, which has 'died / Gone with our laughter a year ago' (5-6). There is great poignancy in the poem's conclusion, where the veteran soldiers of the conflict remain outsiders after the war's end. Rather than sharing in the joys of those around them who 'dance and chase dull heaviness away' (10), they ask to be left to their grief. 'Leave us awhile to mourn for yesterday, / There is immortal sadness in the spring' (11-12), they urge in the poem's closing lines. The conclusion of the poem is particularly poignant, as 'yesterday' can be read as referring to the war, which remains prominent in their minds. The 'immortal sadness in the spring' further emphasises that the soldiers' feelings about the future have been made melancholy by their wartime experiences, thus suggesting that Bonner's melancholy remained with him after the war's end.

There are few clues as to the true state of Bonner's health in the writing produced in the post-war years. During this time, he worked industriously, writing articles for *The Nineteenth Century and After* and continuing to write

verse and prose, the majority of which was never published (Taylor *magd.oc.ac.uk*). The success of Bonner's ergotherapy is certainly evidenced by his dedication to his creative endeavours but, sadly, Bonner's attempts to forge a literary career were unsuccessful and Bonner terminated his contract with his agent in April 1928. Just under a year later, on 2 March 1929, Bonner committed suicide, leaving behind a wife and young son.

It is inappropriate to speculate as to the reasons for Bonner's suicide; however, its timing is ironic when considered in light of the resurgence of the First World War in the public consciousness that was taking place at the time. Ten years after the war's end, a vast outpouring of expression began as the literary market was flooded by memoirs written by veterans of the war. Titles included Max Plowman's *A Subaltern on the Somme,* Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* and Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That,* among a great many others. In 'Survivors of a Kind', Brian Bond identifies that a desire to move on from the war motivated the composition of these texts, with the articulation of wartime memories through writing operating as a cathartic means by which veterans could put their martial selves behind them and 'escape from the overwhelming spell exerted by their war experience' (xv).

Bond's use of vocabulary, in describing war experience as a spell, is poignant indeed when we return to contemplate Bonner's suicide. In the poem, 'Sonnet', Bonner had voiced his delight that love had brought him relief from the troubling memories of his war experiences, which he himself termed a 'spell'. On leaving Craiglockhart, however, Bonner remained under the enchantment of his wartime experiences, as evidenced by the fact that he was discharged from the army on the grounds of being medically unfit. By 1929, he may have come to feel that he had lived for an intolerably long time under the shadow of his wartime memories.

The rediscovery of George Henry Bonner has enabled a former patient's links to Craiglockhart War Hospital to be re-forged almost one hundred years after his admission to the hospital. Bonner's rich archive of creative

work is a further boon to researchers, as the volume of material therein could form the basis of a thesis in itself. The story of Bonner is invaluable to this study of Craiglockhart thanks to the fact that he was an active participant in the hospital's literary culture. His enthusiastic editorship of *The Hydra*, combined with his contributing various poems to the magazine, serves as evidence of his active participation in the hospital's cure. Thanks to the manuscript verse preserved within the George Bonner Papers at Magdalen College, Oxford, it has been possible to construct a more nuanced picture of Bonner that reveals him to have been a man who suffered greatly as a result of his wartime experiences and whose quest for lasting relief was only achieved, tragically, by his suicide. The content of his verse, as examined in this chapter, powerfully embodies the tension between the repression and articulation of wartime experience that Craiglockhart's doctors sought to relieve. Bonner's willingness to engage with his wartime memories and troubling emotions in his manuscript verse suggests his deep desire to achieve a cathartic release from his symptoms, while his *Hydra* poem 'Invocation' is a moving statement of his great faith in Craiglockhart's therapeutic method. It is poignant indeed that his early death, at the age of only 33, prevented all possibility for the future articulation of experience and silenced a creative voice of such great sensitivity and potential.

9. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the literary culture that existed at Craiglockhart War Hospital and the means by which the hospital's patients were encouraged to move from the repression of their traumatic memories towards the articulation of experience. This study makes a significant contribution to knowledge as a result of the fact that it is the first doctoral study to examine Craiglockhart War Hospital. It is hoped that it will not be the last.

This study has found that a literary culture did indeed exist at Craiglockhart War Hospital and that its existence was encouraged by the hospital's therapeutic ethos. Thanks to the hospital's implementation of psychological methods of treatment, patients were encouraged to engage in the articulation of their wartime experiences during the course of their treatment. Furthermore, the hospital's insistence that patients engage in an active cure, via ergotherapy, encouraged the literary-minded men being treated at the hospital to reconnect with their creative interests.

The research carried out in this thesis has allowed for new insights to be gained regarding Craiglockhart War Hospital. First and foremost, Craiglockhart was a progressive institution whose treatment methods were innovative in embracing the use of psychological methods and attending to the holistic health of patients. Study of *The Hydra* has confirmed the magazine's rich potential as a scholarly source that is of value both in terms of the wider genre of soldier magazines and as a specific document of life at Craiglockhart. Read in terms of the tension between the repression and articulation of experience that existed at the hospital, *The Hydra* embodies both simultaneously. Here, soldiers could write about their emotional experiences, as seen in the verse studied in chapter three, while also making jokes that minimised the horrors of neurasthenia and creating a vision of a productive, cheerful reality that enabled them to hope that recovery was possible.

The case studies conducted in the second half of the thesis have likewise enhanced our understanding of the hospital's significance in the lives of three of its patients. In the case of Wilfred Owen, it has been shown that his doctor, Arthur Brock, played a greater role than previously identified in helping Owen to confront his traumatic memories during their course of his treatment. Not only did Brock help Owen to embrace the role of the poet through his ergotherapy, he also provided Owen with a means of using poetry for therapeutic ends. As the study of selected poems from the final year of Owen's life has shown, it was by articulating his anxieties and emotional strains through verse that Owen was able to maintain his mental health as he negotiated his return to active service in France. In the case of Siegfried Sassoon, it was argued that, in addition to the friendships and greater emotional maturity forged during his time at Craiglockhart, a darker legacy of his time at the hospital endured. Here, a great irony regarding his time at the hospital was uncovered; namely, that during what was a profoundly difficult time in his life, Sassoon was a provided with a means of dealing with his troubling experiences through autognosis. Yet by failing to implement this method in his post-war life, Sassoon ensured that he would be forever haunted by his experiences in the First World War. Finally, George Henry Bonner is a poignant case study indeed. His enthusiastic participation in Craiglockhart's literary culture suggests his desire for a return to function and health while his manuscript verse, and eventual suicide, indicates that the articulation of experience was an impossibility for some men who had been psychologically shattered by their wartime experiences.

Having completed this study of Craiglockhart War Hospital, the prime recommendation for future research is that scholars should engage with Craiglockhart's rich history and use it as the basis for their work. If the current thesis succeeds in initiating a greater conversation about Craiglockhart's scholarly significance, then the trials of the previous years will have been well spent! Given the hospital's links to a number of different

disciplines, there is much further study that could be carried out. With specific regard to literary studies, Craiglockhart provides fertile ground for further investigation. Future literary studies could expand on the study of *The Hydra* carried out in this thesis by examining the magazine's content in greater detail and moving beyond the general approach taken here. In-depth study of *The Hydra* magazine could also be used as the basis for comparative study. The study of *The Hydra* alongside other magazines produced in recuperative settings might provide further insights into the points of similarity and difference that existed between Craiglockhart and other military hospitals, for example. Having introduced readers to George Henry Bonner in this thesis, it would be fascinating indeed if further research could identify other members of Craiglockhart's literary culture and incorporate discussion of their lives and creative work into future studies of the hospital.

A number of limitations were encountered during the course of this research. One of the key limitations of this study resulted from the lack of existing full-length studies of Craiglockhart. This meant that the current study had to proceed on an exploratory basis and that the scope of the thesis was difficult to delineate, as a large amount of background research had to be carried out before any analysis could be undertaken. This further carried with it the risk that the thesis would become overly descriptive in establishing facts with little meaningful analysis.

A further limitation of this study came in the form of the inclusion of a lengthy discussion of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Though worthy of study in relation to Craiglockhart, it could be argued that this thesis could instead have prioritised further study of *The Hydra*'s content or sought to identify other members of the hospital's literary culture who were worthy of study. Had this thesis chosen not to examine Owen and Sassoon's time at the hospital, it would have been possible to examine *The Hydra*'s creative content in greater detail. Instead of discussing the magazine in more general terms, as in the second chapter of this thesis, a more detailed investigation

of its content may have yielded further interesting results valid to the discussion of Craiglockhart's literary culture.

Appendices

Appendix A

1. ‘Parting’ – Synjin

Go–for we to together–where you are
    There I must be, being yours beyond control;
    All I have asked you, heart and thought and soul,
And asked one recompense–to be no bar
Across your path in life, nor ever war
    Your strange free genius, rounded, strong, and whole.
    For you the larger life, the farther goal.
The great world striving–let me watch afar,
And love and serve and wait–and keep always
    The feeling of your presence, there as here.
For all the bitter distance of earth’s ways
    Is nothing, from the Haven, where out-with fear
Our Souls have met and spoken, these last days.
Now go–for love itself goes with you–dear.

2. ‘A Shattered Hope’ – Synjin

True, I have had much comfort gazing on thee,
  Much too, perhaps, in thinking I might have thee
Nearly myself, a fellow soul to live with,
  But weighing well a man’s frail and perilous tenure
Of all good in this restless, wavy world,
  Ne’er dare I set my soul on anything
Which but a touch of Time can shake to pieces.
  Alone, in the Eternal is my hope!
I took thee? That intensest joy of Love

Would soon grow fainter and at last dissolve,
But, if I yielded thee, there is something done
Which from the crumbling earth my soul divorces,
And gives it room to be a greater spirit.
There is a greater pang, methinks, in Nature
When she takes back the life of a dead world,
Than when a new one severs from her depth
Its bright revolving birth. So I'll not hoard thee,
But let thee part, reluctant, though in hope
That greater happiness will thence arise.

3. 'Waiting' – J.W.O'C.W.

Is it but two days since we parted?
The time has semmed long to me.
As I sit here alone, broken-hearted
Awaiting my destiny.
Each night in my dreams I have seen her,
Have seen her and wept in vain,
And my longing grows deeper and keener
Till my love comes again.

Alone in this great drear city,
'Mid the throngs that never end,
An object of scorn or pity,
And nowhere a friend.
But I care not a jot for the gaping crowds,
I care not for fog or rain,
Or lightening [*sic*] flashes, or thunder clouds,
So my love comes back again.

My heart is heavy and weary,
With the weight of a weary soul;
And mid-day sun grows dreary,
And hateful the midnight scroll.
The hours are laden with sadness,
Sadness deep tinged with pain,
And my soul will know no gladness
Till my love comes back again.

A voice in my ear still mingles,
A voice reposeful and clear:
A hot kiss on my lips still tingles,
On my cheek a trembling tear.
My lips shall bourgeon no sweet song,
My heart shall echo no refrain,
But my soul shall be long, and glad, and strong,
When my love comes back again.

4. 'The Shooting of Dangerous "A" Sub Gun' – 'Dear Archie'
(With Apologies to Mr General Service).

We were sitting round the brazier, trying to warm our blood
(It was cold in Dawson City, and, gee! You should see the mud).
There was a Sergeant M'Grew and six of us–covered with mud and snow,
And the range-correction for cordite didn't work at "40 below."

I was in the Yukon battery–the Alaska R.H.A.;
A Sourdough Gunner I was, mates, with only a dollar a day.
I had once been a cheechako, boys (that's an acting-bombardier),
But I got reduced to ranks for getting tight on beer.

The thermometer fell, till at minus one hundred Fahrenheit
The nose of “F’ Sub’s later got froze to the dial-sight–
The wheels got froze, and the brake got froze, and so did the buffer-oil,
And every gun in the battery was stuck at extreme recoil.

“A” Sub we were–the six of us–and M’Grew was our Number One,
And the rottenest piece in Alaska was “A” Sub-section’s gun.
The cradle was loose, the sights askew, and it had an awful score,
With a hole the size of a hard-boiled egg on each side of the bore.

We had hitched the dawgs and hit the trail and mushed for the I.O.M.,
But after a trek–you wouldn’t believe it–the blighter wouldn’t condemn;
So after a razzle in Dawson we hit the trail we came
And hiked her back to the gun-line–tho’ the dawgs were mighty lame.

Well, we were sitting round that brazier, and up spoke Alaska Pete–
The layer he was–a good chap, but suffered from frozen feet:
“Let’s bust her,” and Yukon Ike said “Bon” (Yuke Ike was our Number Two)
And Gyp the Blood–our Number Four– aid “Good” and so did M’Grew.

We heated a frozen smoke-shell, and thawed out the driving-bands,
And we loosened the fuse with a pick-ace, and Cripes! It was cold on the hands.
We laid the gun at 5000, and then we loaded her up,
And the Number Three pulled the lever when Dan M’Grew said “Hup.”

But the muzzle-cover was on and frozen hard as a board,
And part of the shell got stopped there, and part where the piece was scored.
We know from the first thing that shooting would either kill or cure,
But not even M’Grew expected a goldarn premature.

Well, boys, I'm growing old now, and pensioned long ago,
But I'll not forget the Yukon with the temperature "40 below"
For Dan M'Grew and the others were blown up–every one,
And I am the sole survivor of "A" Sub's dangerous gun.

5. 'Stared At' – 'An Inmate'

Now if I walk in Princes Street,
Or, smile at friends I chance to meet,
Or, perhaps a joke with laughter greet,
I'm stared at.

I've got a blue band on my arm,
But surely that's not any harm;
A small white tab may be the charm–
I'm stared at.

Suppose I dine out any night,
Drink Adam's wine, and don't get tight,
No wonder that my nerves ain't right,
I'm stared at.

Craiglockhart mem'ries will be sad,
Your name will never make us glad;
The self-respect we ever had
We've lost–all people think us mad.

If "Someone" knew who wrote this verse
My simple life would be much worse,
And on my tomb would be this curse,

“To be stared at.”

6. ‘Present and Future’ S.R.G.S.

The sun sets deep in the smoke-clouds,
Lurid and darkly red,
It gleams with a murky glimmer,
On a world both shattered and dead;

On a world of smoke-blackened ruins,
And bodies shrouded in gloom,
And there broods over all a deep silence–
A silence like that of the tomb.

But oft through this fearful stillness
There breaks a more fearful sound–
The cries of the falling in anguish
As dying, they lie on the ground;

The cries of a grief-stricken woman,
Homeless, distraught, and wild,
The sweet, loving voice of a mother
Trying to comfort her child.

The crack of machine gun and rifle,
The crash of the cannon’s roar,
Sending forth death–and this message,
“The World–at War.”

* * * * * *

The sun sets over the moorland,
And, far as the eye can view,
The heather-clad hills in the distance
Seem to melt into misty blue.

Soft to the ear from the hillside
Comes the bleating of wandering sheep,
And a farm in the tree-covered valley
Lies nestling, buried in sleep.

The glow of the sunset's glory
Is fading mid crimson light,
And over the earth is falling
The shadowy cloak of night.

No sound can be heard of that conflict,
That conflict of bloody strife;
No sound but that of a murmur–
The mystic murmur of life.

Of a sudden there falls a stillness,
The murmur seems to cease,
Borne on the breeze comes a whisper,
"The World–at Peace."

7. The Road to Armentières – Anonymous

My pal and I went marching up the road to Armentieres–
The lonely road, the weary road, the road o'mud and stone.
My pal and I went singing in the courage of our years,
And now I'm marching down the road alone.

I left my pal asleepin' by the road to Armentieres–
    The happy sleep, the endless sleep, the sleep o' quiet ease.
And I must walk on weary roads, down all the lonely years,
    For I left my pal asleepin' by the quiet poplar trees.

8. Sonnet – F.V.B.

Who in the splendour of a simple thought
(Whether for England or her enemies)
Went in the night, and in the morning died,
Each bleeding piece of human earth that lies
Stark to the carrion wind, and groaning cries
For burial–each Jesu crucified–
Hath surely won the thing he dearly bought,
For wrong is right when wrong is greatly wrought.

Yet is Nazarene no thigh of Thor
Playing on partial fields the puppet king,
Bearing the battle down with bloody hand.
Serene he stands above the gods of war–
A naked man where shells go thundering–
The great unchallenged Lord of No Man's Land.

9. ‘Ballads Of France No.2: Any Private To Any Private’ – S.

(*The speaker pointed out that owing to the number of young married men who were being killed, widows were becoming a great burden to the State*. - Daily Paper.

Our boys are wonderful. They are always able to laugh. - Daily Paper.)

Aye, gie's ma rum. I'm needin't sair, by God!
We've juist been bringin' Wullie doun the line–
Wullie, that used tae be sae smairt an' snod.
Hell! what a mess! Saft-nosed ane. Damn the swine!
They micht kill clean. I kent his auld fouk fine.
Aye, he was mairrit. Man, she's spared a sicht.
Here, Dave, gie's ower that blanket. Aye, that's mine.
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

We gaed tae Tamson's schule. A clever loon
Was Wullie. He was makin' money tae.
A'body liked him round about the toun.
Fitba'? Losh, aye! He was a de'il tae play.
We joined the gither for a bob a day;
An'noo he's deid. Here, Davie, gie's a licht.
They'll pit it in the papers. Weel they may!
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

I canna mak'it oot. It fair beats a',
That Wullie has tae dee for God kens what.
An' Wullie's wife'll get a bob or twa,
Aifter they interfere wi' what she's got.
They'll pester her, and crack a dagoned lot;
An Heaven kens, they'll lave her awfu' ticht.
"A burden to the state." Her Wullie's shot.
I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

Envoi.

What's that? Anither workin' pairtie, noo,

At six? Aye, sergeant, I'll be there a' richt.

Weel, Wullie lad, they winna wauken you.

I kenna, hoo I canna lauch the nicht.

Appendix B

1. ‘An Incident in Literary History’

Sassoon and Owen–names that found their niche
In literary history. Owen’s dead.
The other one survived the bullet which
Toward that War’s end just grazed him on the head.
Yes; *his* career continued. But of late,
His state of mind has made him wonder whether
Sassoon’s continuance was appropriate…
Should not these soldier poets have died together?

For thirty years a person of that name
Has done his level best to supplement
The scraps that opportunely earned him fame.
Yet literature’s cold chronicles resent
The existence of this ghost. He should have kept
Silence, and out in France forever slept.

Appendix C

1. ‘Golden Acre: An Allegory’ (Craiglockhart and Golden Acre—FARE 3d.) – ‘H.’

Have you ever been to the Golden Acre
Where the farmers plough with a silver share?
Its richness would tempt the soul of a Quaker,
For it rains in sapphires and diamonds there.

Then heed, and go down the Street of Princes
(For that’s the way to the Acre of Gold),
With its ladies fair as the blossoms of quinces,
But no so bitter to taste, I’m told.

And see you go down the street unsmiling
Look not to the left hand nor right,
Nor heed princesses, howe’er beguiling,
Till the Golden Acre comes in sight.

* * *

I shall never win to the Golden Acre,
For, whenever the Princes’ Street I see,
Some princess always asks me to take her
To the House of Pictures to drink some tea.

2. ‘Triolet’ – ‘H.’

I meant it for Nurse,
But I gave it to Sister,

Which made it much worse
(As I meant it for Nurse) ;
'Twas an excellent verse
Rhyming "Mr" with "kissed her" :
I meant it for Nurse,
But I gave it to sister.

3. 'Beads' – 'G. A.'

Our speech is like a silver tray
Where beads for words are scattered;
Some new and bright as yesterday,
Some worn and battered.
Opal and ruby, blue and gold,
For every hue of fancy;
Pearl for the dreams of soft Isolde,
Green jade for Nancy.
And so by subtle choice of these
Into gay songs I string them –
Then to your feet for necklaces,
Beloved, bring them.

4. 'At Dusk' – 'G. A.'

At dusk as I lay
Between sleeping and waking
There came a thought to me
Out of the shadows,
(A bright green moth
Flitting silently
Through the grey air),

And settled on my bed;
But I was too tired
To get my net,
And so
It danced away
Into the shadows.

5. ‘Invocation’ – ‘G.A.’

Mother of gods and men receive us now :
Foredone with fear we stagger through the night
Where shapes of doom pursue us, ghostly arms
Reach out to grasp our spent and shivering souls.
Mother of gods and men, we pray to thee,
Men desperate with dread ; 0 hear our prayer,
And soothe us on thy bosom ; grant that we,
Lulled by the peace of all eternal things,
The woods and fields and immemorial hills,
May drink of quietude and fear no more.
And thou,
Son of the great All-mother, in whose ear
The music of her streams for ever croons,
Whose path the elves and woodland spirits haunt
And birds and all the small fieldfaring folk,
Lover of all green ways and windy slopes,
God of renewing by the earth renewed,
O hear !
Speak to us now, that in thy sacred place
The choric chant of many rushing woods,
Swelled on the mighty organ of the wind,
May drive in a great avalanche of sound

From our sick souls all deathly whisperings.
Give us again the dream 0 shining one,
The dream that we have lost ; and to our eyes,
Dull with the lapse of long and weary days,
With wandering in the twilight haunts of fear,
Reveal the way through the old quiet fields,
By plough and pasturage, by wood and moor,
Leading us up from hell's dim shadowlands
To the far sunrise where on the edge of day
Is set the Golden City of our Dreams.

6. ‘Ah Me!’

I used to know the Muse
She sang whate’er I willed her,
But now it is no use
For the army it has killed her.

I used to know a youth
Much praise his virtue won him,
But now he is uncouth
For the army has undone him.

I used to know a child
Demure and meet for wooing,
Now she is bold and wild
For the army was her ruin.

I used to have a mind
With culture I improved;
In vain for now I find
That the army has removed it.

7. ‘Vivamus Mea Lesbia’

The summer swallows that flash and skim
With never a thought for the winter’s cold,
The lark aflame with his morning hymn –
What recks he that the world grows old?
These alone without care rejoice
Tho’ night’s behind them and night ahead:
For us there is ever the secret voice,
“Happy to-day; and to-morrow – dead”.

A dance of gnats in the evening play
Or ever the last of the day light lies,
And naught can the joy of their souls dismay
Till the steel-grey night creep over the skies –
So we, when the times are wrecked and torn,
Will live in the moment, pluck the flower,
And out of the wreck of a world outworn
Will catch the gold of the fleeting hour.

8. ‘Let Us Taste the Joy of Battle’

In a shell-hole,
He crouches,
This officer,
Unable to go forward.
He is afraid.

His men

Are either dead
Or have gone forward.

Except one
Who,
A few yards away,
Shattered and screaming,
Prays to be shot.

But the officer
Scarcely heeds.

Before him
Is the barrage
Into which
No power
Mortal or immortal
Can impel him.
He is afraid.

He has reached that point
Where the mind
No longer controls the body.

Vaguely, tumultuously
Through his brain
Thoughts of his life
Come crowding

Of how he had planned to die
Rushing with a laugh into the fight

Having tasted the joy of battle.

But this
To slink down among the shadows
Slowly extinguished
Is intolerable.

He laughs hoarsely.
He is afraid.
(He thinks…..)

He thinks of friends,
Of tea-tables shining by lamplight
Where there was laughter
When the world was real
And not Hell.

Now they will despise him, his friends,
And speak of him in whispers
As one who failed.
Pity will be his at their hands,
Pity not unmixed with contempt.

And last he sees
The face of woman:
Will she too despise
Or understand?
“Once I was a brave man
And she loved me ;
Now I am a coward
Will she love me still?”

An aeroplane overhead
Hums “Coward, coward!”

Love is greater than death;
But greater than both is fear.

But God
Why does He permit such suffering?

He cries like a child.

“Coward, coward!”

The sound of a heavy shell
Grinding through the zenith.
The end of misery.
Death.

9. ‘I Once Knew A Girl’ (fragment) – with Bonner’s amendments

I once knew a girl: not a bad girl at all
She got married as most of them do
So yesterday week I went down there to call
And I tell you some all it was too
I’ve never liked children they never like me
But politeness was ever my vice
So when they brought in their young son after tea
I said to the mother how nice
She said there was never a baby like this
You afraid that he’ll cry but he won’t

Don't you think he's just sweet won't you give him a kiss
Then I said shall you mind if I don't

[second stanza largely illegible]

~~When I came to Craiglockhart I saw my M.O.~~
My MO said to me what were you till the war
I said Nothing and very nice too
So he said now that you're here you must do something more
some of them things you should do
Just take a cold swim every morning at six
Then a walk say to the Pentlands and back
After breakfast go down t the farm and drop sticks
On by ploughing you'll soon get the knack
After lunch make some rugs or read Homer a bit
You may think you'll get tired but you won't
If you do what I've said we shall soon have you fit

~~I was walking down Princes Street four days ago~~
I went into town to get Sister some string
When a dear little girl smiled at me
And say you look frightfully lonely old thing
Won't you take me to Mackies to tea
After that we might got to the Pictures and then
We would drive at the North Waverley Grill
Or the Royal perhaps but they shut it at ten
And the lady would better still
And then there's a rather good show at the King's
You may think you'll be bored but you won't
How lucky we met we'll do hundreds of things
Then I said Do you mind if I don't

I sat all alone in the lounge after tea
Captain Marshall (thank him) said Hello
Can I sell you a Hydra or praps you'd like three
All the best people read it you know
You don't often see such a high class affair
It's something unique and apart
Actually don't think that you'd find anywhere
Such literature humour and art
I know just what you're thinking about it you fear
It will cost you too much but it won't
Six and six pence will buy it each month for a year
Then I said Do you mind if I don't

Last Tuesday I dreamt such a beautiful dream
I thought it was heaven at first
When it came to and end I woke up with a scream
And I found my hot bottle had burst
In my dream Sister said
Don't attempt to get up Mr Bayles your head
I can see is decidedly bad
You're not to get up have your breakfast in bed
And I'll see if a fire's to be had
Please accept your discharge said my kindly M.O.
Or a month or two's leave if you won't
And you'll take a small pension £2000 or so
Then I said Shall you mind if I don't

10. 'Sonnet'

Broke is the spell: back to their cavernous homes

Vanish the shapes that long have haunted me,
Place fear and sloth and all that crowd of gnomes
That frolic in the portals of despair:
I am alive again: the open air
Calls to me like a lover; the clear sun
Shines for me as of old. God! I am free,
With the gay hazard of life to run.

Henceforth I shall go singing down the years,
Pass laughing through the very gates of hell,
Brimmed with the joy of life – and yet, and yet
What have I done! That grinning host of fears
Your love out drove; 'twas you who broke the spell
Loving me so. Ah, sweet, shall I forget?

11. 'How Shall We Find You Joy?'

How shall we find you Joy? We who are spent,
Too long have we been watchers for the dawn;
And now the curtains of new day are drawn
Hatred and death are still man's whole intent.

How shall we find you Joy? For has died
Gone with our laughter a year ago,
And all our thoughts move solemnly and slow
Like organ music heard at eventide.

How shall we find you Joy? Let others sing
And dance and chase dull heaviness away;
Leave us awhile to mourn for yesterday,
There is immortal sadness in the spring.

Endnotes

3. *The Hydra*: The Magazine of Craiglockhart's Literary Culture

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2. *The Wipers Times*, no. 1, vol. 1, 12 Feb. 1916, p.3.
3. *The Hydra*, no. 4, 9 June 1917, p.7.
4. *The Hydra*, no. 1 Sept. 1917, p.18
5. *The Wipers Times*, no. 2, vol. 1, 26 Feb. 1916, p.4.
6. *The Somme Times,* no. 1, vol. 1, 31 July 1916, p.5.
7. *The B.E.F. Times*, no. 6, vol. 2, 26 Feb. 1918, p.5.
8. *The Wipers Times*, no. 1, vol. 1, 12 Feb. 1916, p. 8.
9. *Craigleith Hospital Chronicle*, no. 2, vol. 1, Jan. 1915, p.6-11.
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13. *The New Church Times*, no. 3, vol. 1, 22 May 1916, p.10.
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16. *The Hydra*, no. 3, 26 May 1917, p13.
17. Ibid, p.13.
18. *The Hydra*, no. 2, 12 May 1917, p.15.
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29. *The Hydra*, no. 10, 1 Sept.1917, p.7.
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31. Ibid, p.41.
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33. *The Hydra,* no. 2, 12 May 1917, p.7.
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35. *The Hydra*, no. 2, 12 May 1917, p.16.
36. *The Hydra*, no. 3, 26 May 1917, p.15.
37. *The Hydra*, no. 7, 21 July 1917, p.7.
38. *The Hydra*, no. 7, 21 July 1917, p. 9-10.
39. *The Hydra*, no. 4, Feb. 1918, p.11.

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2. *The Hydra*, no. 5, 23 June 1917, p.17.
3. *The Hydra,* no. 6, 7 July 1917, p.11.
4. *The Hydra*, no. 1, 28 Apr. 1917, p. 10.
5. *The Hydra*, 'New Series', no. 8, June 1918, p.16-17.
6. *The Hydra*, 'New Series', no. 8, June 1918, p.12.
7. *The Hydra*, 'New Series', no. 9, July 1918, p.16.
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2. *The Hydra*, ‘New Series’, Feb. 1918, p.14.
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5. *The Hydra*, ‘New Series’, Mar. 1918, p.13.
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